

Crusaders Against the Cross

The Fourth Crusade Depicted in Orthodox-Slavonic Written Sources and Archaeological Evidence

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History
at the University of Canterbury, 2018

Abstract

The Fourth Crusade was a unique event that stood out among all other Crusades. It was conceived as a victorious return of the warriors of Christ on a mission to recapture Jerusalem from the Muslim infidels, thus providing a much-needed lifeline to the overseas Christian kingdoms. But the Fourth Crusade actually ended with the fall of Constantinople, the capital of the largest Christian empire of the time, and the birth of the Latin Empire from the millennium-old ruins of Orthodox Byzantium.

The consequences of the Fourth Crusade for the peoples of the Orthodox world have not been thoroughly studied and there is a significant gap in the use of important written sources and archaeological data regarding the Fourth Crusade. This thesis makes use of Orthodox-Slavonic texts published only recently to explore the attitude of Orthodox nations towards the Crusade and the changes that had occurred in spiritual and everyday life after the fall of Constantinople. The thesis also analyses Latin written sources that inform our understanding of the diplomatic and religious infighting between the Latin Empire, Bulgaria, and the three Greek statelets that succeeded the Byzantine Empire. It includes the first English translation of some texts and traces the crusade's impact on the daily life of the Orthodox nations using evidence obtained through little-known and unpublished archaeological data from dozens of settlements and fortresses in what is now southern Bulgaria, then part of the erstwhile Latin Empire. Combining archaeological evidence with all available written sources chronicling the campaign enables the fullest possible reconstruction of the Fourth Crusade. This approach recovers unknown facts, events, and battles involving the knights of the Fourth Crusade and corroborates the veracity of all the written sources about the Fourth Crusade by identifying and including archaeological artefacts discovered at locations described by mediæval chroniclers.

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List of Abbreviations

- CMNS*** *Chronicon Medieval Narrative Sources. A Chronological Guide with Introductory Essays.* János M. Bak and Iva Jurković (eds.), Brepolis, Turnhout, 2013.
- EMC*** *The Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle.* Graeme Dunphy (ed.) Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2010.
- FLHB*** *Fontes Latini Historiae Bulgaricae*
- FGHB*** *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae*
- FCHMEOS*** *The Fourth Crusade in the Historical Memory of the Eastern Orthodox Slavs,* Snezhana Rakova (ed.), Tendril Publishing House, Sofia, 2013.

Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Chris Jones of the University of Canterbury, for his support during all these years, from our first meeting until the submission of my finished thesis. Our extremely productive regular meetings and the excellent communication we maintained throughout the entire process made the writing of this thesis possible in a stress-free and supportive environment. My free exchange of ideas with Dr. Jones, combined with his always constructive criticism and support for my innovative approaches to the research subject, have yielded excellent results, making my writing of this work a truly satisfying experience. Thank you, Sir, for your confidence in me and for our rewarding work together!

I wish to also acknowledge and thank Dr. George Nekhrizov of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, with whom I had the pleasure of conducting archaeological excavations on sites related to the Fourth Crusade in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains every archaeological season from 1996 until 2013. Some of the artefacts we discovered together have proven extremely important, although when we first encountered them we could only guess at their true significance. All of that, plus the invaluable experience I accumulated in the course of our collaboration in the field during all these years, have provided a solid basis for the present research.

My thanks also to Dr. Deyan Rabovyanov of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, for the information, both published and unpublished, that he provided for my research, together with photographs of offensive and defensive knightly weapons from the territories of Bulgaria and Macedonia. A word of gratitude is also due to Stanislav Iliev of the Museum of History in my hometown of Haskovo, Dr. Chavdar Kirilov of the University of Sofia, Dr. Mitko Madjarov of the Archaeological Museum in the town of Hisarya, Aneta Bakamska of the Historical Museum in Pernik, Angel Grigorov of the University of Sofia, Elena Bojinova of the Historical Museum in Plovdiv, George Dzanev of the Historical Museum in Razgrad, Stefan Bakardjiev from Historical Museum in Yambol and George Kumanov of the History Museum in the town of Velingrad, all of whom contributed information and photographs of artefacts.

My deep gratitude to Nadezhda Penkova for her invaluable assistance for the translation of some previously unpublished Orthodox-Slavonic written sources.

I deeply appreciate Dr. Derek Whaley's help for his copy-editing of this thesis and thanks to School of Humanities & Creative Arts for funding this process. I am also grateful to

Dr Whaley, who read the final thesis and offered advice and suggestions as well as helping me to avoid one or two errors. Thank you!

I appreciate the comments of my examiners Natasha Hodgson and Snezhana Rakova which helped me to improve the final version of the thesis.

Last but not least, I want to thank my wife and two daughters for their support and for putting up with me during all the time that we could not spend together in the course of my research.

Angel Trendafilov

Introduction

There is no doubt that the organisation, the initial goal, and the ultimate outcome of the Fourth Crusade were completely at odds with its original intentions or, for that matter, any respective parameters of a crusade. The consequences and impact of the sacking of Constantinople on mediaeval Christian Europe were enormous, some of which continue to reverberate to the present, making the Fourth Crusade a somewhat uneasy topic of conversation between Orthodox and Catholic Christians. Yet despite its uniqueness, the Fourth Crusade has never enjoyed the attention it deserves from historians, who typically spare just a few humble pages for it amid their otherwise bulky – and quite numerous – scholarly tomes dedicated to the crusades. The reason for that is clear: to historians who espouse traditionalism and pluralism, the question as to the motives behind and the realisation of the Fourth Crusade does not pose such a challenge as the preceding three crusades.

The main schools of thought in historiography regarding the crusades are well described by Giles Constable, who identifies them as traditionalist, pluralist, generalist and popularist.¹ Thomas Madden, in his review of Constable's book, makes a brief summation of the ideological differences distinguishing these four streams from each other:

The traditionalists, like Hans Mayer or (at one time) [Christopher] Tyerman, hold that crusades include only those bound for the east to assist Christians or to redeem the holy places. Pluralists, such as Jonathan Riley-Smith, define the crusades more broadly as any campaign called by the pope for the defense of Christendom or the Church that carried with it an indulgence and privileges. Popularists, such as Paul Alphandéry, approach the crusades from the spiritual motives of the participants. This has the effect of embracing movements such as the Children's Crusade, which traditionalists and pluralists reject, while rejecting many of the crusades that the other two accept. Finally, Constable identifies the generalists who define crusade as any holy war or military action in defense of the faith.²

Thus differentiated, the main streams in crusader historiography are defined in terms of their attitude toward and interpretation of the organisation, motives, and goals of the crusades. Of course, quite often we witness an exchange of ideas between these four streams, a tendency

¹ Giles Constable. *Crusaders and Crusades in the Twelfth Century*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2008. p. 371.

² Madden, Thomas, 'Book review of Giles Constable', *Crusaders and Crusades in the Twelfth Century, The Medieval Review*, p.1. Retrieved from: <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/16999/23117> (Accessed 11.05.2018).

that has become increasingly pronounced in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century.

It is abundantly clear to medieval historians that the key motive for the Fourth Crusade has been twisted beyond recognition and that the final outcome, although ostensibly a victory for the crusaders, is questionable. Most scholars prefer to focus their scientific interest on the three earlier crusades. However, it would be wrong to claim that the Fourth Crusade has not provided fodder for a considerable number of books and scholarly papers. The first chapter of my thesis, titled *Historiography*, deals with a significant part of those publications. All of them constitute research that has contributed to our understanding of the history of the Fourth Crusade, but do we know enough? Does the methodology used heretofore with respect to the Fourth Crusade ensure that all possible sources of information are duly included and considered? Do the Western chronicles, Papal records, Venetian chronicles, and Byzantine sources provide sufficient material for a credible reconstruction of the historical facts? As it turns out, no. A thorough survey of the available historical research regarding the Fourth Crusade has helped identify two substantial gaps, namely the absence of two sources of information without which the fullest and most accurate reconstruction of the facts surrounding the crusade is impossible. These are Orthodox-Slavonic written sources and archaeological data related to the Fourth Crusade.

The debate among the four main streams in historiography (inasmuch as it concerns the Fourth Crusade) seems unable to answer the following questions: What are the consequences for the Orthodox nations of the Fourth Crusade and what can Orthodox-Slavonic written sources and archaeological data reveal in this respect? How can these primary sources contribute to the wider picture of political-religious processes in Eastern Europe in the thirteenth century?

For the purpose of this research and greater clarity, this thesis will be divided in two parts. The first deals with the impacts of the Fourth Crusade on the political and spiritual map of Europe via a historical survey and analysis of little known written sources, thereby providing a new perspective on the subject. The second part reviews the actual consequences of the Fourth Crusade for the material culture and everyday life of the countries affected by it on the basis of archaeological data, which is afterwards checked against written sources to ascertain its credibility. In a number of cases, where no written sources are available, the archaeological data gives us a unique opportunity to increase our knowledge on the matter.

The first chapter identifies the two principal gaps in the research literature on the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire: first, the general avoidance of Orthodox-Slavonic written

sources by historians and, second, the non-use of archaeological artefacts from the time and territories affected by the crusade. Broadly, there is a gap in scholarly interest in the Fourth Crusade compared with publications regarding earlier crusades. This is especially significant in relation to the Orthodox Christian perspective and the consequences of the crusade on that population. The written heritage of Orthodox Slavs aside, practically no Western historians have worked in any depth on the subject. For historians such as Christopher Tyerman, Jonathan Riley-Smith, Michael Angold, Thomas Madden, Donald Queller, and Alfred J. Andrea, Orthodox-Slavonic written sources do not appear to exist. A good example indicative of all Western historiography regarding the crusades can be found in Thomas Asbridge's writings. His references to the primary sources from the Middle Ages are as follows: 'Latin, Old French, Arabic, Hebrew, Armenian, Syriac and Greek'.³ The lack of Slavic primary sources stands out. Asbridge involuntarily points to a gap that can be seen throughout the entirety of Anglophone crusades historiography. The same lacuna occurs in the list of sources used by Jonathan Phillips, who describes his sources as follows: 'The documents here include work by contemporary writers from the Latin East, Western Europe and the Muslim, Byzantine and Jewish worlds'.⁴ Again, Slavic sources are left out. Similarly, while noting that works using Arab sources are not enough, Conor Kostick also omits Slavic written sources. In the introduction to his edited collection, *The Crusades and the Near East*, Kostick writes: 'Despite the rapid growth of research into the subject of the Crusades, it is widely recognised that there exist noticeable lacunae in the use of medieval Arabic sources'.⁵ Michael Angold describes the written sources that he uses in his book, *The Fourth Crusade*, as 'western chronicles, the letters of Inocent III, Venetian archives and Greek sources'.⁶ This is a good range of sources, but Orthodox-Slavonic sources are not present again. A 'noticeable lacunae' definitely exists with respect to Slavic and Orthodox medieval texts relating to the crusades, the Fourth Crusade in particular. One of the primary objectives of this thesis is to analyse and interpret lesser known and untranslated Slavic written sources relevant to the Fourth Crusade.

While it is true that, more often than not, history is written by the victor, the defeated party should also have something to say on the matter. As a result of the Fourth Crusade Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia had lost their spiritual capital of Constantinople, a fact that would inevitably be reflected in their own contemporary written sources. The overwhelming part of

³ Thomas Asbridge. *The Crusades: The war for the Holy Land*. Simon & Shuster, London, 2012. Introduction, p.2.

⁴ Jonathan Phillips. *The Crusades 1095 – 1197*. Longman, Harlow, 2002, p.7.

⁵ Conor Kostick (ed.). *The Crusades and the near East*. Routledge, Oxon, 2011, Introduction, p.1.

⁶ Michael Angold. *The Fourth Crusade*. Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, Essex, 2003, p.117.

that wealth of knowledge remains unexplored. But since those sources present the Fourth Crusade and its consequences in a very different light, their absence from the publications of most scholars remains both inexplicable and inexcusable. Because of their absence, what we know about the Fourth Crusade remains incomplete. Without those written sources, it is impossible to attain balance in our assessment of the nature and effect of the military campaign. It is indeed hard to believe that, even today, in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, no such effort has been made within the scope of a single study and that the Fourth Crusade is still not properly researched from all possible angles. Filip Van Tricht's 2011 monograph comes closest, but the range of Orthodox-Slavonic written sources he uses is very limited.⁷ Van Tricht uses two Serbian hagiographic texts to provide the Orthodox point of view of the Fourth Crusade, while the present thesis incorporates twenty-one Orthodox-Slavonic written sources. This will be discussed in depth in the Chapter I and Chapter III. Written sources are an invaluable wellspring of information, skipping some categories of those in a research project that claims to be exhaustive is a perplexing omission. What secrets do Orthodox-Slavonic written sources hide with respect to the Fourth Crusade and can they supplement, enrich, or alter what we have known up until now? Yes, they do contain information that has remained largely unknown to this day; information that, if woven into, and correctly interpreted within the broader picture of the Fourth Crusade, will surely change our perceptions of it. And herein lies one of the goals of the present study.

Another major hole in the side of the ship that is Western historiography is the use, or rather the lack thereof, of archaeological materials. This is the other visible gap in the literature on the Fourth Crusade is the total absence of any archaeological data. There are some publications regarding crusader archaeology in the Latin West that mostly deal with finds in modern-day Israel, Cyprus, Syria, and Jordan.⁸ But the use of archaeological evidence from excavations related to the period and territories of the Third and Fourth Crusades is absent not only from Western but also from Eastern historiography. Kostick, one of the few authors to draw attention to archaeology, writes: 'Archaeology is so much more rooted in the materials rather than ideas of society'.⁹ This opinion, loaded with a large dose of reproach, is indicative of the way that archaeologists and historians develop their own ideas separately. In fact, these two sciences evolved differently. In regard to the Fourth Crusade this is the blunt truth which

⁷ Filip Van Tricht. *Latin Renovatio of Byzantium : The Empire of Constantinople (1204-1228)*. Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2011.

⁸ Adrian J. Boas. *Crusader Archaeology. The material culture of the Latin East*, Routledge, London 1999.

⁹ Conor Kostick (ed.). *The Crusades and the near East*, Introduction, p.1.

outlines the other primary goal of this thesis: putting into service the archaeological data from the Fourth Crusade.

Thomas Asbridge is aware that there are a lot of information except the written sources that needs attention: 'Beyond these texts, the study of materials remains – from imposing castles to delicate manuscript art and minuscule coins – has thrown a new light on the crusading era'.¹⁰ These are archaeological sources and Asbridge gives us additional recognition that they are not in use. Despite Kostick's and Asbridge's acknowledgement, the use of archaeology regarding the Fourth Crusade tends to zero while, as noted above, the information that archaeological artefacts dating from the period can reveal when placed in a specific context and location is of paramount importance for the correct reconstitution of history. And yet, very few researchers seem to be aware that such artefacts exist. The Fourth Crusade happened beyond the pages of Geoffrey of Villehardouin or Robert de Clari. It was a real-life event that left a tangible imprint and an actual body of material evidence in the form of fortresses, roads, battlefields, and even diplomatic and commercial relations, all substantiated by ruins, horse rider's spurs, swords, armour, signet rings, and coins. Such finds are in a position to corroborate or refute the well-known written sources and, moreover, reveal new facts about which the published history has, to date, been silent. The archaeological artefacts interact with history in a way that textbooks cannot. They are an open portal to a past that was not recorded in written sources and that confirm facts that were recorded. That is why using broad-based archaeological evidence in support of historical knowledge is another important task of this thesis.

The second chapter searches for the roots of the antagonism between the Christian West and East. The background story to the Fourth Crusade was largely defined by the relations between Catholic and Orthodox Christians following the Great Schism of 1054. And those relations were far from flourishing. The passing of the first three crusades across the territory of Byzantium triggered conflicts that were to be expected and even to a certain extent justified by the Great Schism. The Great Schism of 1054 was also a reason why the change made in the original plan of the Fourth Crusade was accepted by the pope and much of mediaeval Western Europe. After all, the crusade was directed against Orthodox schismatics and heretics, which was considered a God-pleasing act. Innocent III would proclaim the Albigenian Crusade only five years later, a campaign to eradicate the heresy of Catharism, a fact that makes it all too clear that the idea of staging crusades not only against Islam but also against various

¹⁰ Thomas Asbridge. *The Crusades: The war for the Holy Land*, p.2.

‘deviations’ within the Christian faith was justified. He and his successors, Honorius III and Gregory IX, granted the same spiritual rewards and indulgence for the crusades against the heretics as the crusades to the Holy Land. In the eyes of contemporaries, these military campaigns were equally important. The Fourth Crusade returned attention to the dramatic rift of 1054 by inspiring fresh persecutions of schismatics and, exactly 150 years after the schism, escalated the problem beyond theological debates. In addition, the fall of Constantinople was a political, military, moral, and financial problem, and involved the redistribution of spheres of influence, thereby causing a clash between cultures and a civilisational quandary for the populations that found themselves caught in the whirlwind of these turbulent events. Byzantine Empire or Latin Empire? Catholicism or Orthodoxy? These were the questions that worried Eastern European kingdoms in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade. Who would have thought that the Great Schism would have such dire consequences?

The Great Schism itself dates its origins to as early as 856, almost 200 years before the official split. It is because of Orthodox-Slavonic written sources, reviewed in the second chapter, that we are able to trace the history of the Great Schism in new ways and understand its links to the Fourth Crusade. An identification of the root cause of this issue and a more thorough consideration of the written sources that have been overlooked by Western historiography will allow us to build a much fuller picture of the reasons for – and subsequent legitimization of – the Fourth Crusade.

Work with Orthodox-Slavonic written sources gives us yet another advantage, namely the opportunity to look at the Fourth Crusade from a totally different perspective. What did the Fourth Crusade mean to the Orthodox nations? What were the consequences for those nations following the fall of their spiritual capital, Constantinople? There are few other sources that convey more credibly the profound feeling of despair and indignation which overshadowed the spiritual and political life of Byzantium, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia. Chapter III offers an analysis of, as well as translated excerpts from, these written sources. For some of them, this is the first English translation available. These sources contain a wealth of data that has remained largely unused to the present day. In addition to effects of the Fourth Crusade on the spiritual and daily life of Orthodox Christians, these written sources also provide information that has been known previously to very few. What did Constantinople and its opulent churches look like before they were looted by the knights of the Fourth Crusade? What exactly was looted? How did Baldwin of Flanders, the first Latin Emperor, die? The answers to all these questions, plus information from a source of impeccable credibility about the horrific atrocities to which Orthodox monks were subjected in their own houses of worship at the hands of the

Western knights, can be found within these texts. An even-handed analysis of these sources is more than necessary if I am to paint a full, comprehensive picture of this chain of events, as opposed to the one-sided approach that has dominated the historiography of the Fourth Crusade to date.

Following on from their successful capture of Constantinople and the creation of the Latin Empire, the victorious crusaders found themselves surrounded on all sides by Orthodox nations. They were all hostile to the crusaders, as can be expected, but there was one Orthodox country that stood out from the rest. That country was Bulgaria, a kingdom that, at that point in time, was stronger than any one of its neighbours, including the Latin Empire. Bulgaria was different because, though it had adopted Orthodox Christianity three and a half centuries earlier, on the eve of the Fourth Crusade it had surprisingly pivoted towards adopting the Catholic faith as its official religion. In addition, Bulgaria had adopted royal insignia endorsed by the pope – a sceptre and crown – that had been personally sent to the Bulgarian king Kaloyan (Johanitza) by Innocent III and conferred upon the monarch at a state ceremony hosted by the papal envoy, Cardinal Leo Brancaleoni, in the capital city of Tarnovo. What did this move mean and how did it impact the policy Bulgaria adopted toward the Latin Empire? Chapter IV reviews in detail both the mutual antagonism and the cooperation between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire in light of their common affiliation with the Holy See. The thirteenth century was a time of complete dominance of the Catholic Church over the political, spiritual, and daily life of each and every person under their spiritual authority. But did that also apply to newly converted Bulgaria? By using Orthodox-Slavonic written sources and archaeological evidence, Chapter IV seeks to explore the extent to which religion was a determining factor in the relations between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire and uncover the motivations (religious or political) of the respective actors on the political stage of Eastern Europe.

Putting these details into a global framework, Chapter V reviews the relations of the Latin Empire with its neighbours, its difficulties, temporary alliances, and betrayals. As we continue to ponder the subject, the question will logically arise: why, once the Latin Empire was founded amid the ruins of Byzantium, inheriting and accumulating within itself the latter's vast resources, did the knights of the Fourth Crusade not continue their campaign to capture Jerusalem? If brought to a successful completion, it would have served as absolution for all their controversial actions. What better way for them to show that religious motives trump political! Crushing the schismatic Byzantine Empire and re-unifying the Eastern and Western Christians into the fold of the Roman Church could have seemed no less a success than the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. After the fall of Constantinople, the war on Islam was

something that never happened for the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade or at least was relegated to the bottom of their 'to-do' list. B. But being surrounded on all sides by Orthodox nations, the Latin Empire was given no opportunity to start a war against Muslims, even if we can assume that there was a flicker of enthusiasm to do so. The capture of Jerusalem remained but a leitmotif in the songs of court minstrels. Oftentimes, even the Latin Emperors had no choice but to appeal to the pope or the knights in Syria for help in holding onto their conquest. The original idea of the Fourth Crusade had long been forgotten and the very existence of the Latin Empire became a struggle for survival. What had been the chances of the Latin Empire surviving for more than fifty-seven years? What was it that caused the first cracks in diplomatic relations between Rome and Constantinople, providing a window for the three newly-created and mutually irreconcilable Greek statelets to intervene? What was the role of Bulgaria, vacillating between Catholicism and Orthodoxy? Was the recapture of Constantinople by the Empire of Nicaea in 1261 and the restoration of the Byzantine Empire the long-foretold demise of the Latin Empire? Or was it the beginning of an irreversible devaluation of the entire knightly ideal, considering the fact that last crusader fortress at Acre was lost soon afterwards in 1291?

The historical analysis presented in the preceding chapters will provide a whole new perspective for interpretation and understanding of topics that seemed, up to the present, to have been exhausted. The existence of written sources that present an alternative view and provide new information about the Fourth Crusade act as an exciting supplement to what we have known so far. The retracing of historical events in their logical sequence while identifying the reasons for the actions of key protagonists in the Fourth Crusade will acquire a new meaning and level of completeness.

However, the subject of the Fourth Crusade is far from exhausted, for there is another source of information that remains seriously underestimated and underused in modern historiography: data from archaeological excavations and artefacts directly related to the places and events described in the written sources. Such data has not been included, as far as I have been able to determine, in a single piece of research on the matter, which in itself is an astonishing fact revealing the lack of diversity of sources used in the works of leading historians. Furthermore, this problem is not unique to studies of the Fourth Crusade. There is simply no feedback between archaeologists and historians in many instances where studies are carried out to reconstruct the past. This is a significant flaw that accounts for numerous gaps in modern historiography. Regarding the Fourth Crusade, the reasons for the absence of archaeological data in these studies are complex and multi-faceted. While the lack of Orthodox-

Slavonic written sources can up to a point be explained, if not completely excused, by the language barrier, for archaeological data there are a host of other reasons that make the material hard to use, at least thus far. Chapter VI offers a thorough examination of those reasons along with the challenges facing archaeologists in territories of the former Latin Empire. Of course, those challenges do not in any way justify the absence from modern historiography of such valuable sources of information. It is a fact that no the researcher of the Fourth Crusade has identified the absence of such sources until now or explained to his or her potential readers that, had he or she had access to pertinent archaeological data or little known Orthodox-Slavonic written sources, the results of the relevant study could have been somewhat different. Ignorance of the existence of such sources is unacceptable. Perhaps their avoidance thereof is the result of underestimating their potential value. And the fact is that such sources have ground-shaking potential! But even the most highly cherished traditional written sources that are mandatory reading for every scholar of the Fourth Crusade can be substantiated or disproven by archaeological artefacts. With regard to the Fourth Crusade, we must acknowledge the total absence of any archaeological data in modern historiography up to the present.

Taking this matter further, Chapter VII juxtaposes what is described in the written sources and the confirmed presence of knights in fortresses, their participation in battles, and on punitive or rescue expeditions. It is truly exciting when the descriptions of events made by Geoffroy of Villehardouin or Robert de Clari or an official document bearing the seal of the Bulgarian kings Kaloyan or Ivan Asen II, both of whom fought crusaders, receive corroborating evidence in an archaeological find. Such cross-referencing between archaeological evidence and literary sources raises the quality of scholarly research to a substantially new level. Archaeological artefacts also point researchers toward facts and events that may have failed to appear into scholarly writing.

In Chapter VIII, relevant archaeological data gathered in the territory of modern Bulgaria is presented in a systematic fashion and illustrated with abundant photographic material and maps. This database, along with the written sources, provides completely new facts regarding the Fourth Crusade and its aftermath, including the existence of past trade relations, new data concerning undocumented battles, routes of unrecorded military expeditions, and even the locations of long-lost cities. This information can only be enhanced through further archaeological finds relating to the Fourth Crusade that may be discovered in the territories of what are today Bulgaria, Turkey, and Greece. Although the future remains

unknown, what is known at this point has been organised and included in the body of evidence supporting the present study.

In summary, this thesis uses and evaluates previously unknown or little-known Orthodox-Slavonic written sources and archaeological artefacts directly related to the Fourth Crusade. Some of the texts are included here in their first-ever English translations, made for the purposes of this study. In addition, some Papal letters sent to the Bulgarian kings are also translated from Latin into English for the first time. Such written sources add substantial material to the story of the Fourth Crusade, freeing it from the confines of a one-sided historical narrative while emphasising the consequences of a crusade that turned out to be a lot bigger than expected, encompassing every aspect of the spiritual and political life of Orthodox Slavs.

A significant part of the archaeological evidence included in this thesis are artefacts that have been kept in storage at several Bulgarian museums and that have never been made public before. For the purposes of this study, they were systematically inventoried, dated, and photographed. The significance of these new sources of information cannot be overestimated – their very existence is bound to expand the horizons of all historical research made heretofore. They have the ability to speak for themselves, helping contribute to new, previously unknown pages of the history of the Fourth Crusade. As those archaeological artefacts are the only witnesses of that turbulent age to have survived to the present, their correct interpretation is of vital importance for the reconstruction of historical truth. The exciting amalgam of such new data, added to what we already know about the Fourth Crusade, presents a novel, groundbreaking approach to the subject-matter of that campaign. This approach seeks and proposes solutions, suggests answers to old puzzles, and uncovers new facts about the Fourth Crusade with an ease that raises the question: Why has this not been done before? The present study lays the groundwork for future analyses where further approaches will have their place. This is the kind of groundwork that can only grow and be built upon, since the repository of archaeological artefacts continues to expand with more excavations and the emergence of new unstudied and untranslated written sources, including Orthodox-Slavonic, Arabic, or Armenian, which are capable of throwing more light on the matter. I consider this thesis a success if my efforts demonstrate the benefit of working with such sources and pave the way for further studies.

PART I

The Omitted Written Sources

Chapter I

Approaches and Gaps in the Historiography of the Fourth Crusade

Introduction

Analysing the published literature concerning the crusades is a daunting task that could fill many thousands of pages. While a need for such an undertaking perhaps exists, that is not the purpose of this study. There are, however, a number of books and published papers that are widely considered fundamental and definitive for their unquestionable contribution to the history of the crusades. Yet, despite the enormous volume of literature on the subject, there are as yet insufficiently studied aspects of the crusades, particularly the Fourth Crusade.

This chapter will consider some of the accomplishments and shortcomings of modern crusade historiography as a whole and, more particularly, of research papers and publications concerning the Fourth Crusade. It is hard to claim any degree of exhaustiveness on account of the large number of scholars and enormous corpus of research on the subject. As alive today as it ever was, scholarly interest in the crusades has given rise to a fairly dynamic and evolving intellectual environment rich in diverse points of view and opinions. And yet, despite all that diversity, a discerning eye is bound to spot some obvious gaps in the overall body of research on the crusades. Such gaps vary from insufficiently studied written sources to complete absence of archaeological raw data, and are especially noticeable with respect to the Fourth Crusade. This is one of the main motives for the writing of this thesis: it attempts to synchronise diverse sources in order to undertake a more thorough analysis of the events surrounding the Fourth Crusade.

The Fourth Crusade was a crusade unlike any other. The prevailing opinions regarding the crusader ideal and the motives of the organisers and participants in such campaigns, however contradictory they may be, do not automatically apply to the Fourth Crusade. Described as a classic crusade with its aim to free the Holy Sepulchre from the Muslim infidels, the Fourth Crusade differed from its very outset from previous ones in that it was conceived, organised, and executed at sea. However, the waves of the Mediterranean seem to have swept the original idea behind the campaign far off course, morphing it into something few contemporary minds had expected. The capture of Constantinople was, to say the very least, a drastic geographical digression from the initial plan and purpose of the crusade, even if one

ignores the Christian motivations for this historical event. The Fourth Crusade hardly fits the mould of traditional historiographical debate for the motivations (spiritual or mercantile) of participants in crusades and the kind of people they were: armed pilgrims or papally-blessed fortune seekers. But, clearly, the study of the Fourth Crusade needs a different approach. Knowledge of traditional historiographical material is necessary, though, for spotting the differences between the Fourth Crusade and the ones that came before it, as well as to note any gaps in scholarly research up until now.

Streams and scholars

The subject matter of the crusades has kept scholars' minds busy for centuries. Views and opinions about them vary quite drastically. An independent analysis of these daunting events is sometimes impeded by the political and religious bias of the writers. Significant differences are observed in the very notion of what constitutes a crusade in popular and strictly scientific literature. It is important to recognise that the existing different streams in crusader historiography mentioned in the Introduction, namely, traditionalist, pluralist, popularist, and generalist, have come into being on the basis of the different views of historians as to what a crusade actually was. While this debate applies to the earlier crusades, it can hardly be transposed mechanistically to the Fourth Crusade, if it is to be viewed as a crusade in its own right. The reasons for this are many and will be examined in detail in this thesis. Key among them, though, is the distorted original purpose of the Fourth Crusade and the demonstrable conflict between the pope and crusaders after the fall of Zara and Constantinople. The Fourth Crusade was a unique military campaign that started with the pope's blessing and ended with the annihilation of a Christian empire. The question of the knights' motives in joining and participating in this crusade is interesting and multi-layered, but it hardly fits any of the four streams mentioned above.

Crusades have once again become a hot topic and not all sources of information and comment about them can be considered impartial, for bias and prejudice are noticeable even in the work of reputable historians such as Thomas Madden in his article, 'Crusade Myths'.¹ By describing eight myths about the crusades, Madden downplays the apology offered by Pope John Paul II to the Orthodox Church in 2004. The author writes that Pope Innocent III had already 'expressed similar regret' and that he 'had done everything he could to avoid [the

¹ Thomas F. Madden. 'Crusade Myths'. *Catholic Dossier*. Jan-Feb 2002, Retrieved from: <https://www.catholicfidelity.com/apologetics-topics/crusades/crusade-myths-by-thomas-f-madden/>, (accessed 12.05.2018).

crusade]’. John Paul’s apology was welcomed in the countries of the Orthodox world. He said: ‘In particular we cannot forget what happened in the month of April 1204. How can we not share, at a distance of eight centuries, the pain and disgust?’² In the same article, Madden mentions former United States president George W. Bush, Osama bin Laden, and Adolf Hitler. But considering the crusades in light of contemporary events is not conducive to a proper understanding. Myths remain unsolved. The same tendency is noticeable in other scholars as well. As will be discussed below, French sources often show a strong bias regarding the French character of the crusades.

Bias finds an even more extreme expression in Michael Angold’s book, *The Fourth Crusade*, where Angold states:

The fall of Constantinople to the Venetians and the soldiers of the Fourth Crusade was not simply a matter of Western aggression. Byzantine weakness and miscalculations were just as important. It would be harsh judgement, but not without some foundation, that Byzantines had only themselves to blame for the way events turned out.³

For Angold, the broken crusaders’ vows and twisted original purpose of the Fourth Crusade were not as detrimental to the undertaking as the mistakes of the Byzantines. Many Western scholars are reluctant or unable to look at matters from a different perspective, such as from the Orthodox Slavs. Jean Richard best explained this pattern: ‘Without underrating the interest of the Eastern perspective, I have treated the Crusades as a phenomenon closely related into European history with repercussions for the East’.⁴ Yes, the crusades were planned in the heart of Europe but their ‘repercussions’ or actual consequences were mostly on the East. Regarding the Fourth Crusade, most of these consequences were even on the same continent. And still they present an enigma. It can be frankly said that Richard’s ‘without underrating’ means ‘without thorough study’ of the Eastern perspective by Western scholars.

There exist various streams in Western historiography which are defined by how their proponents appreciate the motives and goals of the crusades. Of course, this separation is notional to a certain extent as ideas are often exchanged and overlap. In a perfect world, the

² Kate Connolly. ‘Pope says sorry for crusaders’ rampage in 1204’. *Telegraph Newspaper* 30.06.2004. Retrieved from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/1465857/Pope-says-sorry-for-crusaders-rampage-in-1204.html>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

³ Michael Angold. *The Fourth Crusade*. Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, Essex, 2003, p.28.

⁴ Jean Richard. *The Crusades c.1071-c.1291*. Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 1999, Preface

geographic or religious affiliation of authors should not impede the independence of their research but, as will be noted, this is not always the case. The key divisions among scholars are due to their interpretations of the crusaders' motives, notably whether the spiritual or the material element was the most significant motivation. More specifically, were the crusades a form of Latin colonisation where participants were in search of new lands and wealth, or were they an act of spiritual sacrifice? There are likewise numerous hypotheses and opinions about the Fourth Crusade, which, however, do not contribute to the clarification of the issue. On the contrary, their sheer number and variety are an impediment to resolving it! As Hans Mayer says: 'An enormous amount of ink has been expended by scholars discussing the diversion of the Fourth Crusade'.⁵ He originally wrote that in 1965 and fifty years later this ink has become a lake, but the issue remain unsolved. To correctly position this thesis within the historiography of the Fourth Crusade, a brief analysis of the existing major works on the topic is required. Such an analysis, though far from definitive, will summarise the basic schools of thought and the key scholars who have worked on the subject.

Almost 200 years ago, a French scholar, Joseph François Michaud (1767-1839), wrote a remarkable book. Having travelled to Syria and Egypt, he collected and published his impressions about the crusades in an innovative way in six volumes under the common title *The History of the Crusades*. Although written in a narrative style, his book cast some impartial light on the Fourth Crusade. In it, Michaud criticises the change of the initial goal of the crusade and chastises the pope for his double standards during the crusade and after the conquest of Constantinople. In his opinion, the indulgences given by the pope were used as leverage to manipulate events. One has to acknowledge that such a viewpoint sounds no less extreme today than it did two centuries ago. For Michaud the Fourth Crusade is a disgraceful campaign and its leaders as greedy and dishonest. It is remarkable that at a time when almost a third of Europe had fallen under Ottoman rule, Michaud wrote of the conquest of Constantinople and its consequences: 'Ancient Empire ruthlessly destroyed, the new – in ruins, failed to replace the state that could serve as a stronghold against the Muslims'.⁶ Some modern historians might be tempted to term this viewpoint as 'Pro-Hellenic' and as such, biased. This is a telling example of a far-sighted opinion nuanced with an understanding of the global consequences caused by the Fourth Crusade, consequences faced mostly by Orthodox-Slavonic countries like the Empire of Nicaea, the Despotate of Epirus, and the Bulgarian and Serbian kingdoms. However,

⁵ Hans Mayer. *The Crusades*. Second edition. Oxford University press, Oxford, 1988, p.201.

⁶ Joseph François Michaud. *Histoire des croisades*. Alfred Mame Et Fills , Tours, 1840. English translation by B.W.Robson. *History of the Crusades*. Redfield, New York , 1853, volume 2, p.173.

Michaud did not go any further in his conclusions regarding the destiny of the Eastern European states. Given the fact that he was an eyewitness to the fading but still big Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, his search for the roots of problem is remarkable.

Another prominent French historian established a name for himself in modern crusade research literature. In his book, *Histoire des Croisades*, written in 1996, Jean Richard employs a gripping narrative style that combined a thorough analysis of medieval society and the socioeconomic situation in Europe in an attempt to discover the primary cause for the crusades. His analyses of the ethnic composition of the participants in the crusades constitute quite an accomplishment in their own right. It should be noted, though, that Richard was openly partial to Franks – a name commonly applied to all Western knights. Furthermore, Richard argues that ‘Only the Pope, then, was able to give the character of a Crusade to an expedition’.⁷ Richard also developed the idea in his book, *Le royaume latin de Jérusalem*, that a crusade to the Holy Land was equal to a pilgrimage.⁸ A clear parallel can be drawn between this and Hans Mayer’s concept of ‘armed pilgrimage’, as will be discussed below. Uniquely, Richard always distinguishes between French and German knights, a distinction that is not normally made, especially in the works of Eastern medieval written sources, to whom most of the crusaders were viewed as a homogeneous gang of ‘Franks’ or ‘Westerners’. However, we should remind ourselves that the Muslims were often termed collectively as ‘Saracens’ in the Middle Ages, regardless of whether they were Turks, Arabs, or Mamluks, so a tendency toward generalisation was common on all sides. A drawback of Richard’s otherwise magnificent book is that, after only a few pages, a reader can easily guess that the author is French because his excessive references to nationality and religious affiliation stand in the way of impartial research and undermines the book’s credibility somewhat. But, as Richard himself writes, ‘the national feeling remains one of the mainsprings of the interest aroused by the history of the Crusades’.⁹ This is a clear bias that overshadows Richard’s deep research. His works are prominent examples of an older approach that continues to be important. However, he is not the only one who uses a traditional approach in researching the crusades. The significance of

⁷ Jean Richard. *The Crusades c.1071-c.1291*, p.261.

⁸ Jean Richard. ‘*Le Royaume latin de Jerusalem*’. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1953; Full Russian translation retrieved from: http://royallib.ru/book/rishar_gan/latino_ierusalimskoe_korolevstvo.html (Accessed 18.04.2018).

⁹ Richard, Jean. ‘National feeling and the legacy of the Crusades’. Helen Nicholson(ed.), *Palgrave Advances in the Crusades*, Palgrave Macmillian, New York, 2005, p.204-222.

the pope as a main figure behind the Crusades is widely recognised among historians of the crusaders and Byzantinists. For Jonathan Harris:

A crusade could only be launched by the Pope. Only he could confer the spiritual reward that went with it, the so-called indulgence promised that whoever took part in the crusade would have their sins remitted and would therefore spend less or no time in Purgatory before being admitted to Paradise.¹⁰

Surprisingly, there are Western scholars who have adopted the opposite perspective, blaming the West, the Roman Church, and the Fourth Crusade for all the misfortunes in the East. Steven Runciman was one of them. His books raised the bar much higher for crusades research while provoking a storm of debate that did not subside for almost fifty years. Acknowledged as an authority by both supporters and detractors, Runciman quickly gained a strong following amid students of Anglo-American historical literature and beyond. His books are translated and republished repeatedly in countries such as France, Germany, Italy and Russia that have their own historiographical tradition regarding the crusades. His views about the Fourth Crusade are accepted in the East, in the Orthodox world. He writes:

The Fourth crusade directed, if not preached, against the Christians of the East was followed by a Crusade against the heretics in Southern France... And this was succeeded by Crusades preached against the Hohenstaufen; till at last a Crusade came to mean any war against the enemies of the Papal policy. The Holy War warped to become a tragic farce.¹¹

This idea was further developed and rounded off in another work, in which he says: 'The Crusade had become a movement not for the protection of Christendom, but for establishment of authority of the Roman church'.¹² For Runciman, spiritual motivation was not a leading force in the Crusades, especially the later ones. As could be expected, such bold accusations caused a backlash of criticism, creating a whole stream of historians that subjected his ideas to thorough revision, as will be noted below. But, apart from making enemies, Runciman gained supporters and followers. In 1971, T. S. R. Boase, the then Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, wrote regarding the consequences of the Fourth Crusade: 'The sack of

¹⁰ Jonathan Harris. *The End of Byzantium*. Yale University Press, New Heaven and London, 2011, p.13

¹¹ Steven Runciman. *A History of the Crusades: Volume III, The Kingdom of Acre and the Later Crusades*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1954, p.471.

¹² Steven Runciman *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches during the XIth and XIIth Centuries*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1955, p.150.

Constantinople with its brutalities, profanities and pillage ranks high in the annals of destruction. Perhaps too high...'.¹³ On the same page, he also notes, regarding the consequences of the Fourth Crusade: 'Throughout France and Germany, church after church received its portion of holy booty – a last and most ungracious twist of crusading piety'. The author warns that ordinary people attending services in these churches in the coming centuries would hardly know that those relics were stained with the blood of their brother Christians. A similar point was made in 1974 by Ernle Bradford, a British historian and a sailor who, like Runciman, had lived in the Mediterranean region and was recognised as an expert in the Mediterranean world. He writes: 'Little in History can exceed the monstrous crimes of the soldiers and sailors of the Fourth Crusade. To all intents and purposes, they irrevocably destroyed the Crusader Movement. Far worse than that they let the Ottoman Turks into Europe'.¹⁴ Thus, Boase and Bradford provide additional evidence in support of Runciman's assessment while blasting the iniquities of the Fourth Crusade and the conquest of Constantinople.

Many historians do not agree with Runciman's ideas and conclusions. John Riddle notes that Runciman regards the crusades 'as a barbarian invasion of a superior civilization, not that of the Muslims but of the Byzantines'.¹⁵ Thomas Madden downplays Runciman's concepts, saying that 'Runciman is read today for the beauty of his prose, not the accuracy of his narrative'.¹⁶ Mark Vaughn states that Runciman's works were 'outdated and seriously flawed'.¹⁷ Some went so far as to question his professional credentials as a historian. Jay Rubinstein, for instance, writes: 'Runciman was more a gentleman-scholar than a professional historian'.¹⁸ All of this notwithstanding, all agree that his works are fundamental and his writing abilities remain unsurpassed. Runciman's ideas are still very popular nowadays and have their devoted supporters.

Different forms of political and ethno-geographical bias regarding the crusades exist, has been outlined above. However, the tilt of the scales of the history toward West or East does not help clarify the truth. There are authors, such as Conor Kostick, who try to avoid these

¹³ Thomas Sherrer Ross Boase. *Kingdoms and strongholds of the Crusaders*. Thomas and Hudson, London, 1971, p.156.

¹⁴ Ernle Bradford. *The Sword and the Scimitar*. Victor Gollancz Ltd, London, 1974, p.177.

¹⁵ John Riddle. *A history of the Middle ages , 300-1500*. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, 2008, p.315.

¹⁶ Thomas Madden. *The new concise History of the Crusades*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Langham , 2006, p.215.

¹⁷ Mark K. Vaughn and Christopher Tyerman. 'God's War: A New History of the Crusades'. Book review from: *Naval War College Review*, Spring 2007, Newport, Rhode Island, p. 159–60.

¹⁸ Jay Rubenstein. 'In search of a New Crusade: A Review Essay', *Historically Speaking*, Volume XII, Number 2, April 2011, Johns Hopkins University Press, p.25-27.

problems by taking a pragmatic approach. Kostick's book on the First Crusade is a good example of a different and sophisticated perspective. In analysing the social status of participants in the expedition, he discovered a variety of motivational factors that drove each one of them. However, in his view, the material consideration was no less important over the quest for the spiritual. In his portrayal of the *iuveneres* knights, the author puts forward the idea that 'their motivation for joining the crusade was not strictly material in the sense of search for land and booty'. The violence of these bands of knights in search of the opportunity to prove their military prowess was destabilising Europe.'¹⁹

The adherents to the pluralist school have quite a different outlook regarding the crusades. Many distinguished scholars position themselves in this camp such as Giles Constable, who describes the main differences between the two trends in crusader historiography:

The traditionalists ask where a crusade was going and therefore hold that the crusades basically ended with the fall of the crusader states in the east. The pluralists, on the other hand, ask how a crusade was initiated and organized and thus extend the history of the crusades not only geographically but also chronologically, down to recent times.²⁰

These were the main streams in the crusaders historiography in the twentieth and early twenty-first century. But there are numerous attempts to bridge the gaps between the streams and there are also scholars who do not fit into any of these streams.

Research into the crusades typically begins with the ideas of traditionalists, which are then supported or refuted. For example, Carl Erdmann, a prominent German historian who marked the beginning of the pluralistic trend through his books, identified the spiritual idea as a basic goal of crusades. Writing in the first half of the twentieth century, he bequeathed a huge body of works that still excite scholars' minds. His book, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, upholds the notion that the crusades were a Holy War in defence of the Christians in the East.²¹ Erdmann even assumed that the liberation of Jerusalem was not the primary goal of the First Crusade; rather, the aim was to assist Byzantium against the Seljuk Turks. This concept set the

¹⁹ Conor Kostick. *The Social Structure of the First Crusade*. Brill, Leiden-Boston. 2008, p.298.

²⁰ Giles Constable. 'The Historiography of the Crusades'. *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, edited by Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C., 2001, p.12.

²¹ Carl Erdmann. *Die Entstehung des Kreuzzugsgedanken, Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte*, publ. par E. Seeberg, E. Caspar, W. Weber, Stuttgart, 1935; English translation: *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, trans. M. W. Baldwin & Walter Goffart, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1977.

stage for what was to become a schism between professional historians. Two trends arose regarding the motivations of crusaders concerning the goals of the crusades and on Jerusalem as a primary target as stated by Pope Urban. Followers of the two trends continue to communicate with one another, exchanging concepts, mutually rejecting them, and arguing about details. Erdmann's books are fundamental for everyone with a professional interest in the crusades. His ideas remain relevant and help direct trends in crusader historiography.

Hans Mayer adopted part of Erdmann's ideas and took them further, developing his own thoughts on the subject.²² In his view, the crusaders were armed pilgrims who were forced to wage wars in order to fulfil their pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. This theory can be accepted with respect to the First Crusade, but it is unacceptable as far as the Fourth Crusade is concerned. Mayer writes with some regret that, when Constantinople was conquered by the knights, 'The "Crusade" was at its end; no one spoke of sending help to the Holy Land. The conquerors settled down to life in their new land'.²³ By putting 'Crusade' in quotation marks, Mayer expresses his disapproval of the end of this crusade and his regret that its original goals had been perverted.

Jonathan Riley-Smith took the ideas of Erdmann and Mayer a step further by offering a more precise definition of crusades. He proposed a clear distinction and explained the difference between a crusade and an ordinary war. His theories of Just War and Holy War provide valuable input into the historiography of the crusades.²⁴ For Riley-Smith, the defining distinction between military campaigns was whether they had the pope's blessing or not.²⁵ As is well known, the pope gave blanket absolution to all participants in the crusades, not only those fought in the Holy Land, but also for actions against heretics, Slavs, and pagans within Europe. Following this line of thought, what was the Fourth Crusade? A Holy War or a Just War, considering it was directed toward an established Christian empire? While Riley-Smith provides a solid foundation for a future clarification of the goals and circumstances of the Fourth Crusade, he, like most Western researchers, does not consider in depth the effects of this campaign on the Orthodox world.

The debate regarding what constitutes a crusade goes further. In contrast to Riley-Smith, Christopher Tyerman claims that a papal sanction was not a mandatory precondition for a crusade. In his view, the act itself, 'the taking of the Cross' by a ruler or a nobleman, was a

²² Hans Mayer. *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1965.

²³ Hans Mayer. *The Crusades*. Second Edition, Oxford University press, Oxford, 1988, p.205.

²⁴ Jonathan Riley-Smith. *What were the Crusades?* Fourth edition. Ignatius press, San Francisco, 2009, p.15-16.

²⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith. *What were the Crusades?* p.39.

reason enough for a crusade to be carried out. Tyerman attaches great importance to the religious motivation of the crusaders and describes the events with rich spiritual and romantic overtones. In his book, he tries to convince the reader that the crusades did not follow any political or economic agenda; instead, the crusades were ‘an act of total self-abnegating faith demanded by God’.²⁶ While his opinion may be valid, perhaps, for the first two crusades, Tyerman himself stated in an interview that ‘There was no strategic reason for Western knights and soldiers to be labouring about in the Judean hills in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They were there for essentially ideological and religious reasons’.²⁷ Yet such a romantic viewpoint of the crusades’ goals cannot be accepted for part of the Third Crusade – specifically the conquest and settlement of Philipopolis (Plovdiv) in the Balkans – and is completely unacceptable in the context of the entire Fourth Crusade. With regard to the thirteenth century, a clear distinction must be made between the desire for the Latin kingdoms in the Holy Land to be maintained and the actual outcome of the Fourth Crusade. It is also hard to believe that the revenue coming from those Latin kingdoms in the Holy Land was a factor of little importance for the knights who tried to keep them. The decline of the idea of crusade during the thirteenth century was already a fact, and such superfluous romanticism offered by Tyerman does not help in resolving issues.

The debate about the crusades has deepened to such an extent that Tyerman published a book attempting to present and summarise the different viewpoints on the subject in a systematic manner. He does indeed make an excellent analysis of the motives and purposes of the crusades, including all of those that were conceivably known to him: ‘the Crusades as colonialism, commercial expansion, cultural exchange, enterprises of national endeavour or triumphs of the human (specifically white, Christian and European) spirit; admirable even if shocking in extreme physical religiosity, violence and futility’.²⁸ Although extremely interesting, this book does not offer an unorthodox approach to the subject matter nor does it seek any novel sources of information about the crusades. Deeply focussed on the theoretical aspects of the crusades, it is a prime example of how the overwhelming majority of modern historians choose to operate. Irrespective of what possible assumptions they support with respect to the reasons for the crusades, their approach to the subject is exceedingly traditional.

²⁶ Christopher Tyerman. *Fighting For Christendom: Holy War and the Crusades* Oxford University press, Oxford, 2005, p.29.

²⁷ Christopher Tyerman. ‘A New Examination of the Crusades’. Radio interview, Shelian Kast (host) 27.02.2005. National Public Radio – USA, Retrieved from: <http://www.npr.org/programs/wesun/transcripts/2005/feb/050227.tyerman.html> (Accessed 12.05.2018).

²⁸ Christopher Tyerman. *The Debate on the Crusades, 1099-2010*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2010, p.126.

The very fact that in 2010 a book was published by a leading scholar claiming to systematically summarise and present the conclusions of other scholars suggests that historiographical debate concerning the crusades has stalemated.

There are also scholars who do not readily fit the traditional or pluralist streams described above but deserve special attention because of their balanced position and extensive research on the topic of the crusades. Studies of this type appeared in the early twenty-first century and do not adhere strictly to established templates for the goals and the motivation of the crusades set in twentieth century. Philip Van Tricht's book, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople (1204-1228)*, is both interesting and innovative, as it proposes the kind of approach to the subject matter of the Fourth Crusade that is seldom seen among Western historians. In it, Van Tricht has tried to include as many and as diverse written sources as possible. In addition to the traditional Greek and Latin authors, he also pays tribute to Orthodox-Slavonic, Islamic, and Armenian written sources. Definitely a breath of fresh air in Western historiography, the book manages to consider the situation in countries like Bulgaria and Serbia at the time when the Latin Empire was founded and afterwards. The Slavic written sources used by the author are not numerous, yet the very fact that he includes and analyses some of them sets a new precedent in crusader historiography. Van Tricht writes: 'From the Slavic region of the Byzantine space there are a few Serbian hagiographies that provide information about Latin-Serbian relations and about the internal organisation of the Latin Empire that are worthy of mention'.²⁹ Van Tricht mentions later the lives of St. Sava and St. Simeon as sources for the Fourth Crusade. This is a good start, but actually the Orthodox-Slavonic written sources with information for Fourth Crusade are more than thirty! Though it was difficult for him to look at events from the point of view of Orthodox Christianity, the author nevertheless reaches the conclusion that: 'Furthermore in imperial letters in the year 1206-1213 the war against Bulgaria was portrayed as being a war against enemies of the true Christian faith'.³⁰ Bulgaria is officially a Catholic country at the time, with a king and archbishop appointed by the papal legate Brancaloni, but practically Bulgaria remained nonetheless a country of schismatics, any act directed against purportedly in the service of God. This problem will be addressed further in the thesis. Van Tricht also offers a unique political perspective on the Fourth Crusade and the subsequent Latin Empire. What sets his ideas apart from the majority is that he considers the period of existence of the Latin Empire as part of the

²⁹ Filip Van Tricht. *Latin Renovatio of Byzantium : The Empire of Constantinople (1204-1228)*, p.11.

³⁰ Filip Van Tricht. *Latin Renovatio of Byzantium : The Empire of Constantinople (1204-1228)*, p.390.

history of Byzantium, citing a number of examples of collaboration and unification between crusader knights and Byzantines in the higher echelons of the capital's society. But Van Tricht does not take into account the psychology of the Eastern people. As David Nicolle rightly notes: 'The concept of "holy war" was essentially foreign to Byzantine, Orthodox Christian values, though wars could be justified on religious grounds, because the emperor and the empire were "holy" defenders of Christianity'.³¹ The state that was established after 1204 is seen by Van Tricht 'not so much as an aberration...but as an integral part of Byzantine history'.³² The process of integration was normal to some extent, perhaps determined by a range of economic and political reasons, but any claim of continuity after 1204 is far-fetched.

Considering the infighting between the three Greek statelets that came into being after the fall of Constantinople, the attitude of the clerics and the unwashed masses outside Constantinople, and the collective hostility of all its neighbours, it is difficult to assert that the Latin Empire was just a stage in the development of the Byzantine Empire. Rather, the year 1204 marked the violent death of a millennium-old empire, for which 1261 brought not a renewal but a restart. Some scholars even argue that the Latin Empire was doomed from the beginning. Donald E. Queller writes: 'The failure of the Latin Empire was probably inevitable from the beginning founded upon alien soil with hostile population, dependent for men and money upon the West and provided with a weak institutional base, even the greatest statesmanship probably could not have succeeded'.³³ The ideas which Van Tricht puts forward in his book with respect to the efforts made by the Latin Emperors to continue the traditions of the Byzantine Empire are certainly not shared by most of his Eastern European colleagues. Barring some inaccuracies with the hierarchy of Bulgarian aristocratic titles ('tsar', i.e. king, being described as equivalent to 'imperator', or emperor) and the slight bias on his part in favour of the achievements of the Byzantine Empire, it should be acknowledged that Van Tricht's use of diverse written sources, including Slavic, to create a general picture of the age are worthy of admiration and a welcome improvement compared to past scholarship..It is highly commendable that Philip van Tricht takes notice of, and uses, a wide range of written sources, including some Slavic ones that came to his attention. This is a new approach and a

³¹ David Nicolle. *The Fourth Crusade 1202–04: The betrayal of Byzantium*. Osprey Publishing, Oxford, 2012, p.35.

³² Filip Van Tricht. *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople (1204-1228)*. p.428.

³³ Donald E. Queller. *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople, 1201-1204*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977, p.153.

breath of fresh air for Western historiography, which on the whole makes little use of such sources.

Another representative of a twenty-first century historian dealing with the crusades in a non-traditional way is Thomas Asbridge. In his book, Asbridge interprets the crusades as well-organised campaigns by the pope, who sought to deflect the devastation of endless European wars away from the continent. In his words, 'Before preaching of First Crusade most Latin knights still regarded acts of bloodshed as inherently sinful, but they already accustomed to the idea that in the eyes of God certain forms of warfare were more justifiable than others'.³⁴ Asbridge's assumption is that the request by the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I for help against the Seljuks was the reason why the pope summoned the First Crusade, reviving an idea previously put forward by Erdmann. As a representative of a new generation of historians, he successfully blends together ideas from the major streams, borrowing the causes of the crusades from Erdmann and the crusaders' motivation from Runciman. A thoroughly superb read, Asbridge's book has one major drawback: out of its 767 pages, only five are dedicated to the Fourth Crusade, reflecting the writings of other authors discussed above.

Despite this pattern, serious work regarding the Fourth Crusade has been done by a number of Western scholars. One such scholar, who relies on a balanced analysis, is Jonathan Phillips. In his book, he points to the Great Schism as the beginning of an ever-growing problem between the Catholic and Orthodox worlds. This was compounded by distrust and animosity during the first three crusades, such as the half-hearted support on the part of the Byzantines and the undisciplined armies souring the relationship between fellow Christians. Analysing the events in depth, Phillips provides insight into the grim outcome of the Fourth Crusade: 'had first set out to recapture the holy city of Jerusalem, and not to destroy, as they had the greatest civilisation in Christendom'.³⁵ In Phillips' view, the motivations of the crusaders were a combination of disparate components. He writes: 'It will never be possible to ascertain the precise motives of individual crusaders and, while the bulk of the evidence suggests a strong religious drive, other, more secular aspirations cannot be ignored'.³⁶ In addition, he also explains that 'The desire for loot and, in some cases, land was undeniably another of the crusaders' motives'.³⁷ Phillips' view of the reasons for the crusades and the

³⁴ Thomas Asbridge. *The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land*. Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2010, p.14.

³⁵ Jonathan Phillips. *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople*. Pimlico, London 2005, Prologue, p.XII.

³⁶ Jonathan Phillips. *The Crusades 1095 – 1197*. 2002, p.17.

³⁷ Jonathan Phillips. *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople*. p.320.

motivational factors for the participants in them is based on viewing spiritual and mercantile motivations equally. His view definitely enriches Western historiography without subscribing to any of its main streams. Regarding the capture of Constantinople, Phillips' unconditional view is that this is a tragic event – a clash between two Christian civilisations.

Another reason for the clash between the Christian East and West is mentioned by John Godfrey. He writes: 'The Byzantine-Muslim connection was one of which the Crusaders found hard to comprehend, and for which they could not forgive their Greek brothers – Christians'.³⁸ This is an interesting point of view, but Venice and Genoa have strong commercial relations with the Muslim world at the same time. Whether it can explain the cruelty of the crusaders from the Fourth Crusade towards the Orthodox Christians is a question that needs further analysis. Godfrey pays attention to the new trade routes opened for Westerners after the capture of Constantinople and the spread of Byzantine relics into Western Europe. Considering the long-term consequences of the Fourth Crusade, Godfrey returns to some of the ideas first raised by Michaud 200 years ago, stating:

The Ottoman Turks were at the gates of the fatally weakened Constantinople, and large areas of Europe were soon to be open to successive weakening and disruption of the Empire which was the marvel of the world, had thus ensured the survival and extension of the power of the Islam, against which they pledged themselves to fight. It is one of the strangest paradoxes in history.³⁹

Thomas Madden separates the Fourth Crusade from the previous three crusades. He wrote a number of studies and books on the crusades and especially the Fourth Crusade.⁴⁰ Undoubtedly a respected historian, Madden was commissioned to write the 'Crusades' entry for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. His book, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*, analyses in a very balanced and objective manner the Fourth Crusade and the doubts, hopes, and expectations of all parties. Madden's view is similar to the conclusions outlined by Jonathan Phillips, John Godfrey, and Steven Runciman: 'The sack of Constantinople was the most profitable and shameful in mediaeval European History'.⁴¹ He adds in his book that 'The Byzantines' deep sense of betrayal and bitter anger toward Latins would become lasting legacies of 1204 that, for many, still live today'.⁴² Regarding the earlier crusades, Madden

³⁸ John Godfrey. *The Unholy Crusade*. Oxford University Press, 1980, Oxford, p.24.

³⁹ John Godfrey. *The Unholy Crusade*. p.160.

⁴⁰ Thomas Madden, Donald E. Queller. *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997; Thomas Madden. *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London, 2003.

⁴¹ Thomas Madden. *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice*. p.173.

⁴² Thomas Madden. *The new concise History of the Crusades*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Langham, 2006, p.119.

definitely places spiritual motivations over material, arguing that, ‘although Crusaders no doubt dreamed of vast wealth in opulent Eastern cities, virtually none of them ever even recouped their expenses. But money and land were not the reasons that they went on Crusade in the first place. They went to atone for their sins and to win salvation by doing good works in a faraway land’.⁴³ Perhaps Madden’s approach is a good starting point for understanding what exactly the Fourth Crusade was. However, Madden does not go in depth, pursuing other points of view. As noted above, he is far from the only one.

Engrossed in the dominant debate over motivation and what constitutes a crusade, scholars devote most of their attention to the early crusades, with the Fourth Crusade being sidelined from general discussion. In fact, all four historiographical streams have one important thing in common: none of them consider archaeological data from the crusades. And like archaeological data, Slavic written sources also usually remain outside the sphere of interest of Western scholars. On the few occasions when such sources do gain a mention, most notably in the book by Van Tricht, it is to add a touch of exotic flavour and does not reach its full potential. A thorough check through the records of the latest *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* reveals that seventeen out of twenty-two Orthodox-Slavonic sources used in this thesis are not present, and those present have no English references.⁴⁴ The situation with the existence of Orthodox-Slavonic written sources in *Chronicon: Medieval Narrative Sources* is even worse.⁴⁵ Only three of twenty-two written sources considered in this thesis have a place on the pages of this otherwise useful book. Table 1 in the Appendix shows these understated sources, their status in the major encyclopedias, and all available translations. The table is quite telling concerning the variety of sources used by Western scholars, and it clearly outlines the gaps in knowledge regarding the Great Schism and the Fourth Crusade. Such obvious gaps significantly impede any discussion on the subjects of Orthodox-Slavonic written sources and archaeology in the context of the Fourth Crusade, since it is very hard to discuss material that has not been made available. The present thesis will fill that vacuum and also become a point of reference for a more meaningful discussion of the subject of the Fourth Crusade. These topics will be discussed in depth in Chapters II and III.

Eastern scholars

⁴³ Thomas Madden. ‘Crusade Myths’, *Catholic Dossier*. Jan-Feb 2002, Retrieved from: <https://www.catholicfidelity.com/apologetics-topics/crusades/crusade-myths-by-thomas-f-madden/>, (accessed 12.05.2018).

⁴⁴ EMC. Graeme Dunphy (ed.). Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2010.

⁴⁵ CMNS. János M. Bak and Ivan Jurković (eds.). Brepolis, Turnhout, 2013.

Thus far, I have tried to highlight the basic trends in Western historiography about the crusades while identifying some of its most prominent representatives. This analysis outlined the gaps and some insufficiently studied aspects and viewpoints in the Western written tradition regarding the Crusades. But the crusades excite the minds of Eastern scholars, too, and their arguments are likewise far from perfect. However, their viewpoint is also important. Due to numerous reasons such as the language barrier and financial and marketing difficulties, a wide range of books focussed on the crusades remain unknown to Western audiences. That is why the opinion of the Eastern scholars is worth exploring, despite some examples of bias and one-sided thinking. By outlining the wider extent of different views on the crusades, this thesis strives to find the golden mean on this controversial topic.

Unlike the diversity of Western literature, modern Eastern writings are characterised by uniformity of opinions. In Eastern historiography, the schools of thought concerning the crusades that are so evident in Western writings cannot be distinguished. For instance, it is not an overstatement to say that the crusades are a theme that provokes some rather strong negative emotions among Greek scholars, whose nation was directly impacted by them, especially the Fourth Crusade. Finding an opinion that is free from bias is close to impossible. It is important to note, as will be discussed below, that scholars from all Orthodox countries often have views that match or overlap. It is clear that even in the twenty-first century, historical, political, and religious encumbrances are not easy to shake off. But this thesis will attempt to present the Orthodox point of view without losing its objective and critically analytical focus with respect to all participants in these events.

Very often, Orthodox emperors and kings also have deviated drastically from Christian values, and religion has invariably not been the leading motivation behind their actions. One of the most prominent representatives of Greek historiography active on the subject of the crusades is Dionysios Zakythenos, who wrote his books under the influence of the Greek 'Megali Idea'.⁴⁶ This concept, envisioned as the restoration of the Byzantine Empire to its former glory and within its original borders, was very strong at the time when Zakythenos was writing. It is a manifestation of Greek nationalism and definitely stands in the way of proper scientific research and sound conclusions. It is also profoundly negative in its view of the West. Many views similar to that of Zakythenos exist in Greek historiography. Below, I will discuss

⁴⁶ Dionysios A Zakythenos. 'La conquista di Constantinopoli del 1204. Venezia e la spartizione dell Impero Bizantino', *Storia della civiltà Veneziana*, 1979. ; Zakythenos, Dionysios A., 'L'attitude de Venise face au Declin et à la chute de Constantinople', Hans Georg Beck, M. I. Manousakas, Agostino Pertusi(eds.) *Venezia centro di mediazione tra oriente e occidente*, 1977.

several perspectives that are not as biased, typically expressed by young scholars who did their studies in the West.

Greek scholars who try to be objective create a favourable impression. A book edited by Angeliki E. Laiou, *Urbs capta: The Fourth Crusade and Its Consequences*, is a good example in this respect. It presents a balanced view of the events from the perspective of the heirs of the worst affected nation. Notably, Kolias Taxiarchis explores military aspects of the Fourth Crusade and Cryssa Maltezou presents the Greek version of the Fourth Crusade.⁴⁷ These articles mark a step ahead for Greek historiography. Laiou also co-edited a book with Roy Parviz Mottahedeh that is a comprehensive attempt to identify and analyse all parties concerned in the Fourth Crusade, although there is still a minimal presence of Orthodox Slavic reactions and implications.⁴⁸ Another contributing scholar from Greece is Nikolaos Chrissis. His book, *Crusading in Frankish Greece: A Study of Byzantine-Western Relations and Attitudes, 1204–1282*, is an excellent study of the relations between the Greek Orthodox nations and the Latin West with extensive use of the related papal correspondence.⁴⁹ While reflecting different points of view, Chrissis focuses on Greece; the Slavonic attitude and viewpoints are not presented, nor is there use of archaeological data.

Another recent book attempts to be objective by including different viewpoints. Titled *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204-1453: Crusade, Religion and Trade between Latins, Greeks and Turks*, it is a collection of writings by Western medievalists, Byzantinists, and Ottomanists.⁵⁰ The topics are broad, but several young Greek researchers have shown good potential for modern scholarship. However, their universal opinion is that the Fourth Crusade weakened the Byzantine Empire, making it an easy target for the Turks. What concerns this thesis and its methodology has been presciently noted by the above-mentioned Nikolaos Chrissis:

⁴⁷ Kolias Taxiarchis. 'The military aspect of the Fourth Crusade'. *Urbs capta: the Fourth Crusade and its consequences*. Angeliki E Laiou (ed.). Paris, Lethielleux, 2005, p 123-140.; Cryssa Maltezou, 'The Greek version of the Fourth Crusade: From Niketas Choniates to the History of Greek Nation'. Angeliki E Laiou (ed.), *Urbs capta: the Fourth Crusade and its consequences*, Paris, Lethielleux, 2005, p. 151-160.

⁴⁸ *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (eds). Washington, D.C. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001.

⁴⁹ Nikolaos G. Chrissis. *Crusading in Frankish Greece: A Study of Byzantine-Western Relations and Attitudes, 1204–1282*. (Medieval Church Studies, number 22.) Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols. 2012

⁵⁰ *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204-1453: Crusade, Religion and Trade between Latins, Greeks and Turks*. Nikolaos G. Chrissis and Mike Carr (eds). Routledge, New York, 2016.

Exploring the full range of interactions between Orthodox Greeks, Catholic Latins and Muslim Turks is a challenge for most individual scholars, not only on the basic linguistic skill needed to approach the available sources but even more so on account of the diverse social relations and political and cultural traditions of each one of these groups.⁵¹

Accidentally or not, Slavic medieval texts are absent again from this list of available sources, reflecting a similar trend in Western historiography, discussed above. If there is one thing Eastern and Western historians share between themselves, it is their complete disregard for Slavic sources and archaeological data. There is no unbiased comprehensive historical research by a Greek author that would rank quite in the same category with the writings of Erdmann, Madden, or Phillips. Still, the very existence of this collection of essays brings hope for the future of modern Greek historical writing. As Chrissis writes in his introduction, 'The present volume is only a small step; but one step, we hope, in the right direction'.⁵²

The Byzantine Empire was the core of Orthodox Christianity for more than a millennium, but it should be noted that Russia is the modern capital of Orthodox Christianity and pan-Slavic ideas. Russian science has produced eminent scholars who, despite their good analytical skills, cannot transcend the Orthodox frame of mind. One such personality is Fyodor Ivanovich Uspensky, a Byzantologist who lived for some time in Istanbul and conducted archaeological surveys in many Slavic countries like Bulgaria, Serbia, and Macedonia in the early twentieth century. The crusades are a major topic in his books and articles, but Uspensky is a clear proponent of the idea of the primacy of the Orthodox Church and pan-Slavic ideas. Leaving these points aside, his books still provide some interesting reflections.⁵³ For example, Uspensky draws a clear dividing line between the early crusades and subsequent campaigns, writing:

When the original goal of the crusades ceased to be a leading motive, political considerations came to the fore. The ambitions of the crusade leaders shifted from the liberation of Jerusalem and the Tomb of Christ from the clutches of the infidels towards the creation of independent

⁵¹ Nikolaos G Chrissis, Introduction. *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204-1453 : Crusade, Religion and Trade between Latins, Greeks and Turks*. Nikolaos G.Chrissis and Mike Carr (eds). Routledge, New York, 2016, p.2.

⁵² Ibid., p.16.

⁵³ Федор Успенский. *История Византийской империи*. Санкт Петербург 1913; О.Авилова (ред) *Федор Успенский: История Византийской империи. Расцвет. Крушение*. Преиздана ,АСТ, 2011 г.; Feodor Uspenski. *History of the Byzantine Empire*. Sankt Petersburg, 1913.Reprinted: Feodor Uspenski. *History of the Byzantine Empire. The raise and fall*. АСТ, 2011.

states in the East, the conquest of Byzantium as well as towards the extraction of economic gains from the newly captured Byzantine and Muslim territories.⁵⁴

While Uspensky had no doubts about the original religious motivations of the First Crusade, which places him squarely in the traditionalist corner, he was firmly convinced that, at a later stage, those motives were pushed aside and subsequent crusades increasingly served as a front for military or commercial expansion. In support of this claim, Uspensky points to the personal motivation of Venice in organising and directing the Fourth Crusade. As a result of trade conflicts:

Emperor Manuel I seized the property of the Venetian colony in Constantinople. Twenty thousand Venetians lost their goods and their homes. Ten years later, in 1182, the Venetian colony was again plundered, but this time the Byzantines crossed the line, as many Venetians were slaughtered or sold into slavery.⁵⁵

Uspensky worked in the nineteenth century, but his studies definitely transcended their time, as the narrative style that was characteristic of that age was enriched with fairly in-depth analysis regarding the causes and effects of the crusades.

The next generation of Russian historians reiterated and developed Uspensky's views further. One example was Mikhail Zaborov, author of fourteen books and 365 articles mostly on the crusades. In *Crusaders in the East*, Zaborov writes: 'Western chivalry committed its seizures in the East under the guise of the pretext of "defending the West" and the Christian faith from the "infidels" – i.e. the Muslims'.⁵⁶ The general negative attitude towards the Fourth Crusade can easily be found in Zaborov's books and articles.

⁵⁴ Федор Успенский. *История на Кръстоносните походи*. Издателство "Мария Арабаджиева", София, 2005, р.8; [Fyodor Uspenski, *History of the Crusades*, 'Maria Abadjieva' publishing house, Sofia, 2005, р.8;]'[Когато първоначалната цел на кръстоносните походи престава да бъде водещ мотив, на челно място излизат политическите съображения. Амбициите на предводителите на кръстоносците да отправени те към освобождението на Йерусалим и Гроба Господен от ръцете на неверниците, а към основаването на независими държави на Изток, към завоюването на Византия, както и към търговските облаги от завоюването на византийските и мюсюлманските владения.]' (Bulgarian translation, 2005).

⁵⁵ Федор Успенский. *История на Кръстоносните походи*, р.138; [Fyodor Uspenski, *History of the Crusades*, 2005, р.138]; ['Император Мануил налага азапор върху имуществото на венецианската колония в Константинопол. Двадесет хиляди венецианци загубват стоката и домовете си. Десет години по-късно през 1182 г. Отново е разграбена венецианската колония, но този път византийците стигат до крайности: много от венецианците са убити или продадени в робство.'](Bulgarian translation, 2005).

⁵⁶ М. А. Заборов . *Кръстоносцы на Востоке*. Москва, Главная редакция восточной литературы, 1980, стр. 137, [M.Zaborov. "Crusaders at East" Moscow, 1980, p.137.]

A scholar worthy of particular attention is Dimitri Obolensky. Though a native Russian, his works belong rather to the Western medieval tradition since he became a distinguished academic at Cambridge and a British citizen in 1948. His major work, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500-1453*, masterfully explores the Byzantine culture and all the nations within its sphere of influence.⁵⁷ Instead of putting forward pan-Slavic ideas, Obolensky brings together all the Orthodox peoples (whether Slavic or not) around Constantinople as the centre of Orthodox Christianity, which is actually a far more convincing approach. Despite their mutual spiritual centre, tensions between Orthodox countries were common. In Obolensky's book, *Byzantium and the Slavs*, the conflicting and often hostile relations between the Byzantine Empire and its Slav co-religionists is traced.⁵⁸ Obolensky is an excellent example of a Russian scholar who does not fall under the influence of Soviet or pan-Slavic ideas.

Serbia has also contributed to research on the Fourth Crusade. Papers presented at a symposium held in Belgrade in June 2012 called 'Before and After the Fall: The Balkans and Byzantine World Before and After the Capture of Constantinople in 1204 and 1453' were published as a book. Its summary states:

The focal points of the book are the two captures of Constantinople in 1204 and 1453, and the contributors analyze the significance of these catastrophic events on the political destiny of medieval Balkan societies, the mechanisms of adapting to the new political order, and the ever-present interconnectedness of a lower, regional elite across southeastern Europe that had remained strong even after the Ottoman conquest.⁵⁹

Three of twelve articles published in the book are related to the Fourth Crusade.⁶⁰ Considering Constantinople to be the spiritual capital of Orthodox Christianity, the authors investigate the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade and the Ottoman invasion of the Byzantine Empire. Part one of the book is called 'In the world without a center: Remaining Byzantine', which is indicative of the line of research followed at the symposium. The book strongly focuses on the Greek texts and Robert de Clari as primary sources – there is no use of Orthodox-Slavonic written

⁵⁷ Dimitri Obolensky. *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1971.

⁵⁸ Dimitri Obolensky. *Byzantium and the Slavs*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1994.

⁵⁹ *The Balkans and the Byzantine world before and after the captures of Constantinople, 1204 and 1453*. Vlada Stankovic (ed). Lexington Books, Lanham, 2016, Summary, retrieved from: https://books.google.co.nz/books/about/The_Balkans_and_the_Byzantine_World_befo.html?id=avTADAAQBAJ&redir_esc=y (Accessed 09.04.2018).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p vii-viii.

sources regarding the Fourth Crusade. This is surprising given the fact that there are Serbian written sources on the subject, which will be thoroughly studied in this thesis. There is no archaeological data used by any of the authors in this book. Again, these oversights are indicative of the gaps existing in crusaders historiography, whether Western or Eastern.

Quite appropriately, this thesis also pays attention to scholars from Bulgaria. An old country, Bulgaria had existed for several centuries by the time of the Fourth Crusade. It occupies a worthy place in the region since it was one of the second wave of countries to officially adopt Orthodox Christianity in 865. The Bulgarian academy has a strong Byzantiological tradition. Regrettably, here too impartiality is a difficult trait to find insofar as the Fourth Crusade is concerned. The opinion of Nikolay Ovcharov, a famous Bulgarian archaeologist and historian, is representative of the vast majority of the Bulgarian academics: 'The Fourth Crusade was a perfectly designed and implemented act of aggression by the Catholic West against the Orthodox East'.⁶¹ The view of another prominent Bulgarian scholar, Krasimira Gagova, also reflects this attitude: 'Very often Christians turned their weapons against other Christians. The Papacy abused and exploited the Crusader idea'.⁶² Another trend noticeable within Bulgarian historical and archaeological circles is the intentional downplaying of the fact that Bulgaria officially adopted the Catholic version of Christianity in early 1204. This act and its consequences will be thoroughly examined in this thesis; however, it is worth noting that Bulgarian scholars still argue that this was a purely political move.⁶³ Besides pure criticism, there are scholars who try to make a rigorous analysis based on facts. Some excellent work in collecting and publishing Orthodox-Slavonic written sources should be credited to Snezhana Rakova. As will be discussed in the section about primary sources, her book represents a unique gathering of a wealth of written material.⁶⁴ The correct interpretation of these texts and their inclusion in the overall picture of the historiography of the crusades are two primary aims of this thesis.

⁶¹ Николай Овчаров. *Победите на цар Калоян*. Издателство: Тангра ТанНакРа, София, 2005, p.16; [Nikolay Ovcharov. *The victories of tsar Kaloyan*. Tangra Tanakra Publishing house, Sofia, 2005., p.16] Original text: 'Четвъртият Кръстоносен поход беше перфектно проектиран и изпълнен акт на агресия от страна на Католическият Запад срещу Православният Изток.' p.16. My English translation.

⁶² Красимира Гагова. *Средновековна Европа X-XIII век*. Изд. "Полис", София, стр.211; [Krasimira Gagova. *Medieval Europe X-XIII century*]. Polis publishing house, Sofia, 2007, Bulgarian edition, p. 211]. Original text: [Много често християни вдигат оръжие срещу други християни. Папството злоупотреби и използва кръстоносната идея.], My English translation.

⁶³ Kiril Petkov. *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2008, p.223, n. 23. 'Kaloyan declares the union, with the caveat that the Bulgarian Church will retain its customs.'

⁶⁴ Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*. Tendril Publishing House, Sofia, 2013.

Conclusion

An analysis of the existing literature would not be complete without making the following points. The disputes between the various streams in Western scholarship should not directly concern this thesis nor will this thesis adopt any of the dominant opinions in Eastern literature as its model on account of their obvious biases. Extremely negative and politically loaded publications of Eastern scholars will likewise be excluded from this pool of sources. The primary aim of this research is not to seek the origin of or the causes for the emergence of the crusades, nor is it to challenge or defend their legitimacy. Neither should it be to complain about the loss of power by one medieval state or another. The focus is specifically directed toward the Fourth Crusade and the way it is perceived by all those involved. The clear shortage of scholarly attention to certain written sources and archaeological materials on the part of Western historiography sets the direction to be followed, and a careful consideration of these issues will delineate this study as an academic work marked by impartiality and a diversity of viewpoints. Thus, the great challenge that this thesis sets for itself, apart from filling some of the gaps referenced above, is to present an independent angle that considers all possible perspectives while proposing some new ideas and approaches.

Chapter II

The Great Schism of 1054 as Presented in Orthodox Written Sources and Its Legacy on Political-Religious Relations within the Framework of Christian Europe

Introduction

The Great Schism in 1054 resulted in the division of the Christian Church into two main streams: Catholicism and Orthodoxy, a dichotomy that remains to this day. The schism was the end point of a period of institutional division between the two churches. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states: 'The relation of the Byzantine church to the Roman may be described as one of growing estrangement from the fifth to the eleventh century'.⁶⁵ The main reason for this was the reluctance of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the leader of the 'Second Rome', to accept the supremacy of the pope. Another contributing factor was the overemphasis placed on the pre-existing differences between dogmas, rituals, and the very internal structure and organisation of the two churches. For example, as Speliopoulous notes: 'While the churches in the West were using unleavened bread in the Eucharist, the clergy in the East believed that using unleavened bread was 'following the practice of the Jews and contrary to the usage of Christ'.⁶⁶ In this context, one of the reasons leading to the division was the inability of the ecclesiastical institutions to place the teachings of Christ above cultural differences between East and West. On the other hand, while in the eastern parts of the empire Greek was the language most widely used for official business purposes, in the West Latin dominated science, religious services, and inter-governmental relations. This linguistic difference added to the mutual feeling of 'otherness' between East and West. But the key dogmatic differences between the two branches of Christianity were the addition in the Latin tradition of the word *filioque* ('from the Son'), approved by Pope Benedict VIII in 1014;⁶⁷ the existence of a

⁶⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/event/Schism-of-1054> (Retrieved 10.04.2018).

⁶⁶ Elke Speliopoulos. 'The great Schism between East and West in 1054'. Paper for course History of Christianity, Liberty University, PA, 2009. Retrieved from: <https://www.scribd.com/document/24460868/Great-Schism-Between-East-and-West-in-1054>. (Accessed 12.05.2018), p.6-7.

⁶⁷ John Meyendorff. 'Theology in the thirteenth century: methodological contrasts. *The 17th International Byzantine Congress : major papers*. The 17th International Byzantine Congress, Dumbarton Oaks/Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., August 3–8, 1986. New Rochelle, NY: Retrieved from . http://www.myriobiblos.gr/texts/english/Meyendorff_13.html (Accessed 12.04.2018): 'The Orthodox side ... was gradually transcending a purely defensive stand, by discovering that the real problem of the *Filioque* lies not in the formula itself, but in the definition of God *asactus purus* as finalized in the *De ente et essentia* of

‘purgatory’ between Heaven and Hell, something Greek theologians denied; and differences in opinion concerning the rank of bishop, the celibate status of priests, and the manner in which the Eucharist was administered, among other issues.⁶⁸ In addition, the political differences between the East and West were also colossal. They are well described by Earle Cairns: ‘Emperors were almost popes in the East, and in the West popes were almost emperors’.⁶⁹

Of course, this study is not primarily concerned with the theological and political disputes over the root cause of the schism. The fallout from that act overshadows centuries of the relationship between Eastern and Western Europe. What must be noted here is that the year 1054 became a *terminus post quem*, following which the war of words and attrition, and the mutual excommunications by the Patriarch of Constantinople and the pope, turned into a veritable battlefield claiming thousands of human lives. What exactly happened and when the theology escalated to bloodthirsty violence?

The lost balance of the scales of the Christianity

There are those who believe that other Orthodox patriarchs contributed more to the schism: ‘If one wishes to find a villain on the Orthodox side for the development of the schism, absentee Greek Patriarch of Antioch Balsamon is a far stronger candidate than either Patriarchs of Constantinople Photius or Cerularius’.⁷⁰ Actually, on account of the decentralisation of the Orthodox Church between its four patriarchs, all of whom were equally hostile to the pope, it is difficult to determine who should take the most credit for the 1054 schism on the Greek side. But the Schism was not exclusively a religious issue.

The conflict that led to the schism was caused by political rivalries between East and West. Unsolvable political disagreements throughout the Middle Ages had only one possible outcome: war. One example of this was the Fourth Crusade, if for nothing other than the treatment of the Orthodox Church in the conquered city of Constantinople. As Geoffrey of Villehardouin writes:

Thomas Aquinas, vis-à-vis the more personalistic trinitarian vision inherited by the Byzantines from the Cappadocian Fathers.”

⁶⁸ Pavlos Koumarios. *Changes in the Liturgical Ordo and their Ecclesiological Implications. The Church as Eucharist: A Delicate Identicalness*.p. 1-2, Retrived from: https://www.academia.edu/26965092/THE_CHURCH_AS_EUCHARIST (Accessed 12.04.2018)

⁶⁹ Earle E. Cairns. *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*. Third edition. GrandRapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996, p.196

⁷⁰ Steven Runciman. *The Eastern Schism.; A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches During the XIth and XIIth Centuries*. Wipf & Stock, Oregon,2005, p.138.

The booty gained was so great that none could tell you the end of it: gold and silver, and vessels and precious stones, and samite, and cloth of silk, and robes fair and grey, and ermine, and every choicest thing found upon the earth. And well does Geoffrey of Villehardouin the Marshal of Champagne, bear witness, that never, since the world was created, had so much booty been won in any city.⁷¹

It is hard not to believe Geoffrey, considering the Slavic written source, *The Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks*, which provides further details:

And on the morrow, upon sunrise, the Franks entered Hagia Sophia and tore off the doors, and broke them up, and the ambo,⁷² and clad in silver and the dozen silver pillars, and the four pillars of the Ark of the Covenant; and they broke up the altar table, and the dozen crosses that rose over the altar, and the pillars, like trees taller than a man between them, and the altar partitions between the pillars, and all was [made] of silver. And they plucked away the wondrous holy table, and removed from them jewels and precious stones, and took it nobody knows where.⁷³

The text continues:

And other churches within the city and without, and monasteries within the city and without the city, all suffered plunder, and we can neither count them, nor tell of their beauty. They robbed the monks and nuns and priests, killing some of them, and chased other Greeks and Varangians from the city.⁷⁴

The account of the looted churches and monasteries is quite extensive, but even these two excerpts from a Slavic source should suffice for a reader to understand the treatment given the Orthodox Church by invading crusaders. It differed wildly from the treatment accorded by that very same army, the knights of the Fourth Crusade, to the captured city of Zara, which was Catholic and enjoyed the protection of the Hungarian King. Geoffrey of Villehardouin writes:

⁷¹ J.M. Dent. *Geoffrey de Villehardouin. Memoirs or Chronicle of The Fourth Crusade and The Conquest of Constantinople*, London, 1908, p. 65. Old French text: 'et fu si grant la gaainz, que nus ne vos en sauroit dire la fin d'or et d'argent, et de vasselement, et de pierres precieuses, et de samiz, et de draz de soie, et de robes vaires et grises et hermines, et toz les chiers avoires qui onques furent trové en terre. Et bien tesmoigne Joffroi de Ville-Hardoin li mareschaus de Champagne à son escient por verité, que, puisque li siecles fu estorez, ne fu tant gaaignié en une ville.' 'In: *Chronique de la prise de Constantinople*, Avec Notes et Éclaircissements Par J.A.Buchon, A Paris, Chez Verdière, Libraire, 1828, p.99.

⁷² In an early Christian church, an oblong pulpit with steps at each end.

⁷³ 'The Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks', Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, p. 173.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

‘Thus did the city [Zara] surrender to the mercy of the Doge, on condition only that all lives should be spared’.⁷⁵ Geoffrey mentions no atrocities or plundered churches in Zara – all lives were spared and churches saved. But in Constantinople, just a few months later, this was not the case. Even if we distinguish Zara as a surrendering city from Constantinople as a city taken by force, the difference is obvious. Zara surrendered due to the overwhelming crusader power before its gates. But backed by the Hungarian King Emeric I and its Catholic heritage Zara was better positioned in the negotiations with the leaders of the Fourth Crusade and received better treatment by the victorious army. Thus, the schism served as the *casus belli* for the popes to happily issue bulls declaring war on perceived schismatics, be they Greek, Bulgarian, or Serb. So was the 1054 schism a good excuse? The military-political dimension of that religious conflict culminated in the conquest and plunder of Constantinople by the knights of the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

There are numerous studies about the schism written by Western and Eastern historians and theologians many of which are biased. Theological disputes will be not pursued in this chapter, only the causes and consequences of the Great Schism. But even the date of the schism is open to debate: some Western scholars argue that it happened in 1204 instead of 1054. Margaret Trenchard-Smith writes: ‘Factually, however, there is a problem with this perception, since it can plausibly be argued on technical and practical grounds (and has been argued by scholars like Francis Dvornik and Steven Runciman) that no schism occurred in 1054—certainly not the “Great Schism”’.⁷⁶ She continues: ‘When did the Great Schism occur? It occurred *de facto* in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, during the 57-year period of the Latin occupation of Constantinople and Byzantine exile’.⁷⁷ Steven Runciman denies the religious motive, replacing it with practical policy, explaining:

It is my aim to show that the Eastern Schism was not fundamentally caused by differing opinions on the Procession of the Holy Ghost or the Bread of the Sacrament but by the conjunction of political events and the prejudice and bitterness that they aroused with the

⁷⁵ J.M. Dent . *Geoffrey de Villehardouin, Memoirs or Chronicle of The Fourth Crusade and The Conquest of Constantinople*, p. 21.

⁷⁶ Margaret Trenchard-Smith. *East and West: Cultural Dissonance and the ‘Great Schism of 1054’*, published by Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University, 2009, p.1. Retrived from: http://www.academia.edu/6179182/East_and_West_Cultural_Dissonance_and_the_Great_Schism_of_1054, (Accessed 12.05.2018).

⁷⁷ Margaret Trenchard-Smith. *East and West: Cultural Dissonance and the ‘Great Schism of 1054’*, p.18.

growing divergence in basic ideology, which the political events forced on the notice of the world.⁷⁸

Without undermining Runciman's view, it must be admitted that this statement is rather extreme and one-sided. As an example of religious-political action, we can look at Eastern Patriarch Michael Cerularius, who 'was distressed at the imposition of Latin rites on Greek-speaking churches in the areas of Sicily conquered by the Normans before the schism and responded by ordering the Latin churches in Constantinople to follow Greek practices.'⁷⁹

There are a variety of factors behind the schism that are well defined by historians. For example, Jeffrey Dale argues that 'The differences driving the two halves of Christianity apart were not only ecclesiological, but also cultural and political'.⁸⁰ Dale's view encompasses the wide range of elements behind the clash of the Catholic West with the Orthodox East, which overshadowed the Middle Ages in Europe. In order to understand these differences, this chapter digs deep into Orthodox-Slavonic manuscripts by looking at six texts that are not included in Graeme Dunphy's *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*.⁸¹

The first cracks

How was the Great Schism and the division of the Church represented in Orthodox literature? Most of the Orthodox-Slavonic written sources considered below remain untranslated into English. This needs to be done because a careful analysis of little-known Orthodox sources pre-dating the fall of Constantinople in 1204 or the 1054 schism can provide hints regarding mutual animosity that has simmered for centuries. The preceding chapter made clear that Western scholars have almost no knowledge of and do not include in their studies Orthodox-Slavonic sources when discussing the Fourth Crusade. This is also true when considering the issue of the Great Schism. Most of the texts used in this chapter have never been translated into English and are not included in the EMC. Such omissions surely stand in

⁷⁸ Steven Runciman. *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches during the XIth and XIIth Centuries*. Oxford, 1955; reprinted 1956, pp. 50-51.

⁷⁹ Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist. *History of the World Christian Movement, Vol I: Earliest Christianity to 1453*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2001, p.391.

⁸⁰ Jeffrey Dale. 'Papal Authority and the Great Schism of 1054'. A Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Course RELH 316. History of the Christian Church I, 2015. Retrieved from: (https://www.academia.edu/25375989/Papal_Authority_and_the_Great_Schism_of_1054) (Accessed 11.05.2018).

⁸¹ EMC. Graeme Dunphy (ed.). Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2010.

the way of a thorough, detailed, and unbiased analysis of these historical events. In the words of Sun Dzu, 'If you know your enemies and know yourself, you will not be imperilled in a hundred battles'.⁸²

Evidence of cracks between Constantinople and Rome began to appear as early as the ninth century, when the Bulgarian kingdom adopted Orthodox Christianity as its official religion. There was, however, epistolary communication between the Bulgarian king Boris I and Pope Nicholas which became a model for canonical law and contributed to the establishment of Christianity in Bulgaria. This was the same pope whom Patriarch Photios pronounced a heretic in 869 at the Fourth Council in Constantinople and excommunicated from the Church. This prompted Emperor Basil I the Macedonian to force Photios off the patriarchal throne, at least outwardly restoring order in the Church. In these turbulent times, Boris I deemed it appropriate to manoeuvre between Constantinople and Rome in order to obtain maximum international recognition in exchange for the conversion of the heathen Bulgarians to the Christian faith. Nicholas found the time, in the twilight of his life, to answer in detail 116 questions addressed to him by Boris regarding Christianity. These documents are preserved and have been translated into English, constituting a unique source of information about the way in which Christian dogmas should be integrated into the everyday life of a pagan state.⁸³ What is more important for the present study is the fact that, since the beginning of its existence as a Christian nation, Bulgaria did not confine itself solely to the Patriarchate of Constantinople but explored other options for its religious affiliation. Choosing the official state religion, therefore, was tied to the search for political priorities and benefits. This did not remain unnoticed by Byzantium and its patriarch, who responded instantly.

Already by the year 867, there had been an accumulation of facts that should certainly have stirred anticipation of things to come in the Balkan Peninsula. Patriarch Photios convened a church council in Constantinople to discuss the conduct of Bulgaria, which, barely two years after converting to Eastern Orthodox Christianity, was allowing religious emissaries from Rome into its territory. Photios (858-867, 877-886) wrote the following indignant message to the Eastern Patriarchs:

⁸² Lionel Giles (trans). *Sun Tzu, The art of war*. Thrifty Books, Blacksburg, 2009, p.27.

⁸³ 'The Responses of Pope Nicholas I to the Questions of the Bulgars A.D. 866', Translated from Latin (*Responsa Nicolai Papae I ad consulta Bulgarorum anno 866*) by W. L. North, from the edition of Ernest Perels. *MGH Epistolae VI*, Springer, Berlin, 1925, pp.568-600. Retrieved from: http://www.pravoslavieto.com/history/09/866_responce_pope_Nicholas_I.htm (Accessed 11.05.2018).

It hadn't been two years since those people had taken up worship of the Orthodox faith when men impious and repulsive (for how else could a pious man describe them!); men who sprung from the darkness (because they were the offspring of Western countries!) – alas, how shall I tell the rest! So these men, like some bolt of lightning or a quake, or a violent hailstorm, or, to put it even better, like a wild boar, pounced with tooth and claw against the newly established people, newly steeped in piety and, by setting shameful examples of corrupt behaviour and distorted dogmas, as long as their courage would allow them, gnawed and nibbled at, and ravaged, God's beloved and newly planted vineyard. And thus they lured the Bulgarians into depravity and away from the pure and rightful dogmas and the pristine Christian faith.⁸⁴

It was hardly mere indignation at the deeds of the Bulgarian King Boris I (852-889) that prompted Patriarch Photios to write those bitter words of unmitigated contempt for the 'distorted dogmas' of the West. What we witness here is a profound rift and a bitter struggle for influence between the churches of Rome and Constantinople that was already raging 200 years before the Great Schism. Boris, seeking the consolidation of the young Christian Bulgarian kingdom, logically sought contact with the Papacy in order to procure the best possible international status for his country. Thus, the conversion of the Bulgarians in 866 and the big question raised by Boris regarding who should have ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Bulgaria significantly contributed to the conflict between Rome and Constantinople that had been simmering long before 1054. This was nothing short of a dress rehearsal for the decision made by king Kaloyan in 1204 to officially re-convert Bulgaria from the Orthodox to the Catholic faith, to which it would belong for 31 whole years. This document also provides the earliest evidence of the presence of Catholic preachers in Bulgaria in the first two years (864-866) after the official adoption of the Orthodox Christianity by the Bulgarian kingdom. That was long before the establishment of the Franciscan (1208) or the Dominican (1214) Orders, whose members routinely undertook such proselytising missions among the heathen peoples of the East. It appears that, at least according to Photios, Catholic preachers were quite successful in their endeavours. This, combined with high-level correspondence between Boris and Nicholas, was a source of deep concern on the part of the Byzantine clergy. It is clear that, during these years, Bulgaria became a battleground between the main divisions of Christianity two centuries before the Great Schism. The Church was already divided and the two sides were fighting for turf.

⁸⁴ B. Laordas and G. Westerink (ed.). *Photius. Epistulae et Amphilochia*. Vol. 1. Lipsiae, 1983, p 42; Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/4/gal/4_100.html (Greek and Bulgarian bi-lingua). Accessed 12.04.2018). My English translation.

There are multiple Orthodox-Slavonic texts written between 1054 and 1204. Some of the earliest were collected by Orthodox monks in the early to mid-thirteenth century. Among those that have survived are *The Brief Saga of the Latins*, *A Useful Tale about the Latins*, , and a group of texts as part of a collection titled *The Chronicler of Pereslavl-Suzdal*, dating from year 1262.⁸⁵ Taking into consideration the Old Bulgarian orthography of the titles, Alexey Pavlov made the assumption that later Serbian or Russian transcriptions of those works originate from Bulgarian prototypes.⁸⁶ The collection was compiled and edited by Cyril II, metropolitan bishop of Kiev (1243–1281), who maintained close contacts with Bulgaria. This is, in fact, one possible explanation for the presence of many Old Bulgarian texts within that already impressive collection of writings. Large parts of this collection were transcripts of already existing writings that circulated among southern Orthodox peoples.

The Brief Saga shows the roots of the problem between the East and the West in the beginning of the text. It claims that all Roman popes to the times of Stefan V (885-891) were Orthodox:

[...]they were Orthodox, who preached the Creed as it was bequeathed by the testament of the First Council and then confirmed and continued by the next six Councils, [that] the Holy Spirit originates only from the Father, as is kept by the Orthodox churches until today.⁸⁷

This corresponds well with the history of the first schism as it is known today. The so called ‘Photian schism’ from 863 – 867 is the starting point for further polarization of the Church.⁸⁸ The author of *The Brief saga* is aware of this fact, which shows that consequences from the first schism were not forgotten from the Eastern-Orthodox Slavs even after two-three

⁸⁵ Людмила Горина. ‘О составлении архивского сборника на Руси в XIII веке’. *Сборник Русского Исторического Общества*. Т. 4. Москва, 2002, с.298–304; [Lydmila Gorina. About the creation of 13th century archive of Russia. *Collection of Russian Historic Society*, Vol.4, Moscow, pp.298-304.]

⁸⁶ Алексей Павлов. *Критические опыты по истории древнейшей греко-русской полемики против латинян*. Типография, Императорской академии наук Санкт-Петербург, 1878; [AlexeyPavlov, *Critical experiments in the history of the ancient Greco-Russian polemic against the Latins*, Typography, Imperial Academy of science, Sankt Petersburg, 1878.]

⁸⁷ Ангел Николов. *Повест полезна за латините. Паметник на средновековната славянска полемика срещу католицизма*. Пам Пъблишинг, София, 2010, стр.267; [Angel Nikolov. *A Useful Tale about the Latins: A literary monument of the medieval Slavic polemics against Catholicism*. Pam Publishing, Sofia, 2010, p.267. Original text: [Сѣи вѣси православни бѣхѹ. неповѣдающе православное знаменіе. бже вѣроуѹж вѣ єдиного ба. тако же прѣдано бы ѿ стго и вѣселенскаго прѣваго събшра. потомъ такоже шестыми стымъ вѣселенскимъ събшры. оукрѣпленно и прѣданно бы. такѣ ѿ оца єдиного исхѣдиди дхъ стыхъ. тако же и прочаѣ црквы до дне сѣдърѣжа.].

⁸⁸ Francis Dvornik. *The Photian Schism: History and Legend*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1948, p. 279.

centuries. Copies of *A Useful Tale about the Latins* can be found in monasteries in Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, Moldova, and Russia, all copied between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries with minute alterations.⁸⁹ This fact underscores the importance that Orthodox peoples attached to the text. The original was almost certainly written before 1262 and, quite probably, before the fall of Constantinople in 1204, according to Angel Nikolov.⁹⁰ This supposition is substantiated by the fact that, although clearly anti-Latin and anti-Catholic at its core, *A Useful Tale* does not mention the fall of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. The anonymous author of a work of this type would not have omitted the fact that the Byzantine capital had fallen into the hands of Catholics, so it is highly likely that this had not yet occurred when *A Useful Tale* was written. Therefore, the text must have been written in the aftermath of the 1054 schism. The patronising tone and the useful tips for the Latins are a sign of the author's frustration with their betrayal of the true faith, rather than their disappointment with some military failures of the Orthodox world in 1204. No such event is ever mentioned in, nor is it in unison with the general spirit of, *A Useful Tale*. Thus, that is the earliest known Orthodox-Slavonic written source that is suitable for analysis, dating in all probability to the years 1150-1200.

A review of *A Useful Tale* shows the depth of the rift between Catholic and Orthodox Christians following the 1054 schism, the intensity of their mutual hatred and disgust simmering and building to a head between the two sides. Knowing that, it is much easier to explain the three-day orgy of atrocity, murder, and plunder committed by the Catholics against Orthodox Christians after the fall of Constantinople. However, this was only the beginning: the deep-rooted cause for that animosity comes clearly into focus once we analyse this little-known text. The author seeks to recount the origins of the Great Schism in the late ninth century, writing about the time of Pope Formosus (891-896), seeking the seeds for the Great Schism way back in time:

It was then that the Latins strayed from the Kingdom, and from the four Patriarchates, and seized Rome for themselves, and became more than anyone enemies to all Orthodox Christians. They also lured many of the Scythian peoples who live outside the boundaries of Rome to the

⁸⁹ Ангел Николов. *Повест полезна за латините. Паметник на средновековната славянска полемика срещу католицизма*. Пам Публишинг, София, 2010, стр.27; [Angel Nikolov, *A Useful Tale about the Latins: A literary monument of the medieval Slavic polemics against Catholicism*. Pam Publishing, Sofia, 2010, p.27]

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.28

West, as they were illiterate and had no books of their own, and converted them to their profane faith, some by temptation, others by force. And thus they fell into many different heresies.⁹¹

Later, *A Useful Tale* considers the historical aspects of the religious animosity between East and West, concluding that the attacks by Cumans and Saracens against Byzantium encouraged the Latins, too, to undertake acts of hostility against the Empire. The author explains that:

... the Latins, as they saw those wars of the heathens [Cumans and Saracens] against the Greeks, likewise became at once even more fierce destroyers of the Christian land and the Church of God and thus established their miserable faith and their heresies on Earth.⁹²

The Saracens had been pestering Byzantium continuously since the seventh century, but more important is the comparison of the Latins to the Cumans, who were allies of many Bulgarian kings and fierce heathen warriors infamous for their violence. Yet in this text, the Latins are portrayed by the author as even more fierce and violent than the Cumans, which is quite telling. According to Robert de Clari, the Cumans were quite a savage and barbaric people. He writes: 'They are savage folk, who plough not, neither do they sow; nor have they house, but they have tents of felt, in which habitations they hide themselves, and they live on milk and cheese and flesh'.⁹³ So a comparison with them could hardly have been flattering to the Catholics.

Another valuable conclusion we can draw from *A Useful Tale* concerns its dating. The Cumans were especially active in Eastern Europe during the period 1089 through 1241, when they were routed by the Tatars. After 1186, when the Bulgarian kingdom was restored, their raids south of the Danube decreased significantly, since they had become *de facto* mercenaries

⁹¹ Anonymous. 'A Useful Tale about the Latins'. Angel Nikolov, *Between Roma and Constantinople, Excerpts from anti-catholic literature from Bulgaria and Orthodox-Slavonic World*. Foundation Bulgarian Historic Heritage, Sofia, 2016, pp.41-106, 212; [Ангел Николов. *Между Рим и Константинопол, Из антикатолическата литература в България и славянския православен свят (XI-XVII)*. Фондация Българско Историческо Наследство, София, 2016, с.41-106; p.212.] Original text: [ни написати кога, извъръгнати и анаѳемъ прѣдати.и тако даже и до нинѣ ѿтоли. и ѿ црва ѿлжчиш латини. И ѿ чѣтыри патрїархїи. и на са Римъ прѣжша иврази бышъ хрїстїаномъ въсѣмъ православнымъ паче въсѣхъ.Прѣльстишъ же и многыж ѣззыкы ѿск. баци прѣбывахъ ѿ вѣнѣшнихъ странъ Рима къ запада. Тако бесловесныхъ и свои книгъ неимашихъ. И на свож скверныа вѣрж шбратишъ. Шѣты льстаще, овѣмъ же и насилѣхъ. И тако въ ереси многы ж различни въпадошъ.]. My English translation.

⁹² Ibid., p. 266. Original text: [Латини же сїа въсѣа видѣше боеванїа азычскаа на грѣкы. абїе и ти ваишъ гоубителїе бышъ земли хрїстїанско, юѣ и цркви бжїи. и тако вѣрж свож злочѣстивѣа. и ереси свож оутвѣрдишъ на земли]. My English translation.

⁹³ Edward N. Stone (ed.). *Three Old French Chronicles of the Crusades*. Chapter 65, Seattle, 1939. Retrieved from: <http://deremilitari.org/2014/01/robert-of-claris-account-of-the-fourth-crusade/>. (Accessed 13.05.2018).

to the Bulgarian kings who ruled a large portion of the former territory of Byzantium in this part of Europe. This provides further proof that the *Tale* was written before 1204 or perhaps even before 1186, when Cuman incursions into Byzantium were a regular occurrence. Such a dating makes the book an anti-Latin text inspired by the schism, without the involving politics and easily understandable resentment held by Orthodox writers after the fall of Constantinople. All the evidences suggest that the Great Schism occurred long ago before 1204 and the conquest of Constantinople by the knights of the Fourth Crusade brings the problem to another level.

Another little-known work from the thirteenth century is *The Dispute of Panagiotis with Asimith*.⁹⁴ It was written by an unknown Greek author sometime between 1274 and 1282, after the signing of the Union of Lyons, and later modified and translated into Orthodox-Slavonic in the mid-fourteenth century. In 1274, Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologos, accompanied by a select group of clergymen, attended the Second Council of Lyons and signed a union between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches that was intended to end the two century-long schism. Donald M. Nicol describes the event: ‘The Grand Logothete Akropolites swore an oath in the name of his Emperor to remain obedient to the Church of Rome, to respect the primacy of the Holy See and to abide the Roman version of the Creed’.⁹⁵ While credit must be given to Michael for his attempt to erase the consequences of the schism and his goodwill in granting concessions in signing the union, we have to mention repressions in Byzantium aimed at suppressing the resentment of the Orthodox clergy. This resulted in the appearance of *The Dispute of Panagiotis with Asimith*, which describes a dispute between the Orthodox priest Panagiotis and the Catholic curate Asimith. Both were fictional personalities and their dispute, as described in the work, took place in the presence of Michael himself. Of course, Panagiotis routs the Catholic priest in a debate on seventy-two points dealing with matters of Christian faith. The emperor, however, condemns Panagiotis to death, which results in him being canonised as a martyr by the people. The level of polemic in this text is not very high since this was a popular work of fiction that reflected the prevailing sentiments in Byzantine society at the time with regard to the announced union with the Catholics. *The Dispute* is of particular

⁹⁴ Михаил Сперанский. К истории “Прения панагиота с азимитом.” В журнале: *Византийский временник*. 1895, Том II. Книжные издательства Санкт Петербуга, с. 521-530 ;[Mihail Speranskiy. About history of ‘The dispute of Panagiotis with Azimit.’, *ByzantineVremennik*, Tome II, Sankt Peterburg book publishers, 1895, p. 521-530.]My English translation.

⁹⁵ Donald M. Nicol. ‘The Byzantine Reaction to the Second Council of Lyons, 1274’. G.J.Cuming and Derek Baker (eds). *Councils and Assemblies*. Papers Read at the Eighth Summer Meeting of the ecclesiastical history society, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1971, p. 114.

value to researchers because texts condemning Latins were very often written by clergymen, and their partiality cannot be overlooked. At one point in the story, the author writes: ‘Peter the Snuffling and Paul of Samosata created this heresy and gave it to you, foul stinking heretics, cursed by the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Council, and you adhere to that same heresy to this very day’.⁹⁶ The text serves as nothing more than a satirical pamphlet whose very existence is evidence that there was a necessity for such texts among the Byzantine public. *The Dispute* was quickly translated into the Slavic languages and became especially popular in Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia in the centuries that followed.⁹⁷ Such popularity was hardly accidental. Besides the Greeks, other Orthodox Christians also identified with the text and found in it answers they were seeking on the matter of the Great Schism and the Union of Lyons. Politically speaking, the union came at exactly the right time in 1274, just a few years after Constantinople was retaken by the Byzantines in 1261. So was it time for the rattling of sabres to stop and for wiser decisions to be made? Not exactly. One of the key reasons for the signing of the union was that, faced with the threat of yet another crusade aimed at restoring the Latin Empire, Michael VIII agreed to pay some concessions as the cost of preserving the restored Byzantium. The West was still dictating from a position of superiority and the ability of Pope Gregory X to organise and direct sizable armies eastwards was in little doubt. It was this imbalance of power that led to the signing of the union. In theory, everything looked perfect, but in practice the chasm opened by the Great Schism once again devoured whatever good intentions there were. Michael met with serious resistance to what was seen by some as defeatist policies. *The Dispute* is but one of the known expressions of this resistance. In the West, Michael was suspected of signing a fictitious deal that would not be enforced by the Orthodox Church. Also, the loss of the Latin Empire was still a touchy subject. The new Pope, Martin IV (1281-1285), skilfully used the mighty fleet and army of Charles of Anjou as a potential arsenal for another crusade against Byzantium.⁹⁸ Perhaps frustrated by the lack of progress, Martin excommunicated Michael VIII Palaeologos from the Church in 1281 without

⁹⁶ Андрей Попов. *Историко-литературный обзор древнорусских полемических сочинений против латинян (XI-XV в. , Типография, Москва, стр.238-286 ;[Popov A. Historical and literature review of old Russia polemic writing against the Latins (XI-XVc).Typography , Moscow,pp. 238-286.]*

⁹⁷ Анислава Милтенова. *Erotapokriseis. Съчиненията от кратки въпрос и отговори в старобългарската литература.* София 2004, стр.297-298; Anislava Miltenova. *Erotapokriseis.Writings represented by brief questions and answers in Old Bulgarian literature.* Sofia 2004, p.297-298. My English translation.

⁹⁸ Kenneth M. Setton. *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571: The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.* Volume 1, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1976, p.139-140.

any apparent reason.⁹⁹ The Byzantine Emperor felt betrayed and his efforts to restore the unity of the Church were compromised. Having failed in the West, Michael was also hated within the empire because of these negotiations. As A. Edward Siecienski summarises:

At the end, all of Michael's efforts could not postpone the inevitable. By the time he died in 1282 the union he initiated was no more – Pope Martin IV (1281-85) had already excommunicated him in 1261 [*sic*] as a “supporter of heretics,” while in Constantinople the Orthodox Church denied him the usual imperial funerary rites for his betrayal of the faith.¹⁰⁰

Michael's heir, Andronikos II, summoned a church council in Constantinople in 1282, which declared the 1274 Union of Lyons to be invalid.¹⁰¹ Thus, in less than ten years, yet another attempt to bridge the schism failed.

The first half of the thirteenth century also saw the appearance of other Old Bulgarian writings that drew a clear-cut line of demarcation between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. In its first edition, the question-and-answer treatise *Razumnik-Ukaz* [Wise Decree], probably written between 1235 and 1274, notes the following: “The true believers are the Syrians, Ivers (Georgians), Greeks, Bulgarians, and Russians, and the half believers are the Franks, Latins, Magyars, Armenians, Czechs, Poles, Germans, Croats, and the Arbanasi...”.¹⁰² The qualifier ‘half believers’ as a synonym for ‘Latin heretics’ became so popular among Bulgarians and Serbs that, around the middle of the fourteenth century, it became a legal term thanks to its entry in Chapter 9 of the *Codex of King Stefan Dušan* (1331-1355):

And if a half believer is found who has taken a Christian woman to be his wife, then he may convert to Christianity if he so wishes, but if he does not convert, then he should have his wife

⁹⁹ Frank W. Thackeray, John E. Findling. *Events That Formed the Modern World: From the European Renaissance through to the war on terror*. Vol. 1 ABC-Clio, , Santa Barbara, 2012, p.216-217.

¹⁰⁰ A. Edward Siecienski. *The Papacy and the Orthodox: Sources and History of a Debate*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2017, p.308.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 309.

¹⁰² Василка Тъпкова-Займова, Анислава Милтенова. *Историко-апокалиптичната книжнина във Византия и в средновековна България*. Университетско издателство “Св. Климент Охридски”, София, 1996, с. 305.; Vasilka Tapkova-Zaimova, Anislava Miltenova, *Historical-apocalyptic literature in Byzantine Empire and medieval Bulgaria*, University of Sofia Publishing house, Sofia, 1996, p. 305. Original text: [в тѣхъ сѣ(т) ꙗ книги правовѣрни(х) гръ(ч)ска и бългáрьска и иверьска полоуѣвѣрнихъ жъикъ іє бѣ а́ аламане бѣ фрѣзи ꙗ вѣгре дѣ ждѣне е́ иковите ѕ армѣне ѕ саси ѥ лѣси бѣ арбанаси ꙗ харватѣ а́и хъизи бѣ нѣмци]. My English translation.

and children taken away from him and his house should be given to them while he is chased away.¹⁰³

There is every reason to claim that the term ‘half believer’ constituted the Orthodox-Slavonic perspective of the 1054 schism.

Most of the collections of polemic writings that circulated in Bulgaria during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries are now lost, although traces of them can be identified in later manuscripts. It must be conceded that, from a methodological point of view, referencing that later material involves a number of risks and challenges. The following section only uses written sources that have been positively dated as originating no later than the middle of the fourteenth century so that the present study is objective as possible by drawing from sources that are as close as possible to the Fourth Crusade and its aftermath.

The political dimensions of the Great Schism and the right of choice

Written sources, whether created by men of the cloth or by lay persons, are a valuable wellspring of information about the actual situation in any given period of time, reflecting accurately the ‘pulse’ of that age and corresponding events. Political treaties and religious Council decisions are documents of a higher order, which determine and decide the destinies of entire peoples and states. Such formal documents are far removed from the sentiments of the common man and the cleric – they are the products of high diplomacy and the driving force in world affairs. However, we cannot afford to blindly rely on information contained in documents issued by apostolic chanceries or imperial palaces as being a true and faithful reflection of reality. Was there a discrepancy between words and facts in respect to mediaeval Bulgaria’s declared affiliation with the Catholic Church, which was sealed with a treaty and title? How did the Great Schism reflect the political relationships in Eastern Europe during the early thirteenth century?

There were three kings who ruled Bulgaria as a Catholic country, a period lasting thirty-one years. The depth of perception of the schism and the sincerity of belonging to a given Christian community can be judged from written sources and archaeological data of the period.

¹⁰³ Н. Радойчић. *Законик цара Стефана Душана 1349 и 1354*. Београд, САНУ, Београд 1960, с. 45; [Book of laws of Stefan Dushan 1349 and 1354, Publish ed and translated by N. Radoychin, SANU, Beograd, 1960]. Original text: Canon law paragraph N 9 out of 201: 9. [О полоувершима. И ако се нађе полоуверац, који е оузео хришћанкоу, ако оусхте, да се крстиоу хришћанство, а ако се не крсти, да моу се оузме жена и деца и да им се даде деокоуће, а он да се изагна.] p.45. My English translation.

One hundred and fifty years after 1054 was not enough for the religious rift to heal or be forgotten. Quite the contrary! While post-schism political alliances and religious unions may have looked good on paper, there was deep distrust and mutual suspicion in every aspect of Catholic-Orthodox relations. Fortunately, we have enough evidence to reconstruct a dynamic reality in which formal treaties were powerless to overcome distrust and the inertia of tradition, which in turn caused severe instability in Eastern Europe during the early thirteenth century.

Bulgaria officially adopted Catholicism as its state religion under king Kaloyan in the winter of 1204, before the capture of Constantinople by the knights of the Fourth Crusade. After the fall of Constantinople and the emergence of the Latin Empire, in theory neither the newly created empire nor Pope Innocent III should have had any issues with Bulgaria. Both countries were Catholic and presumably the then-strong Bulgarian kingdom should have assisted in the consolidation of the Latin Empire. So how deep was the rift caused by the schism? What stopped Bulgaria from crossing effortlessly into the Catholic camp under the terms of the union signed by Kaloyan? The sense of belonging to the East and the Great Schism were probably the reasons why the adoption of the Catholic faith in Bulgaria remained only on paper. But how did things stand in practice?

In the very next year (1205) after the adoption of Catholicism and the conferral upon Kaloyan of a ruler's regalia, during the Easter festivities, Kaloyan routed the cream of the Latin army in the battle at Adrianople and took the Latin Emperor, Baldwin I, prisoner. He never released him despite the pleading of Pope Innocent III on behalf of the captured emperor. In a letter sent to Kaloyan, Innocent pleads:

We therefore suggest to Your Serenity and sincerely advise you that, whereas it is said that you are keeping the Emperor of Constantinople Baldwin as your prisoner, so you should provide a service to yourself by releasing him and thus concluding a genuine, solid peace with the Latins, so they would stop attacking your land.¹⁰⁴

Clearly, a year was not enough time for the loyalty of Kaloyan to the pope to solidify despite the extensive correspondence between the two and the official titles conferred upon him and

¹⁰⁴ Pope Innocent III. 'Letter to Kaloyan from August-September 1205'. *FLHB*, corpus III, Mihail Voynov, Ivan Duychev, Strashimir Lishev, Borislav Primov (eds.). Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, 1965, pp. 363- 364. Original text: 'Quocirca serenitati tue suggerimus et consulimus recta fide, quatinus, cum Balduinum Constantinopolitanum imperatorem dicaris tenere captivum, ita tibi provideas, ut per liberationem ipsius veram et firmam pacem facias cum Latinis, u tab ipugnatione tuaet terre tue penitus conquiescant.' Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/3/gal/3_364.html (Accessed 20.04.2018). My English translation.

Patriarch Basil I by the Holy See. Kaloyan did not capitulate to the pope's pleading, which was telling as far as the intentions of the Bulgarian king were concerned. The new sheep in the papal flock turned out to be a predator that had not forgotten his habits and had a difficult time fitting into the bucolic harmony of the envisioned Catholic Balkan Peninsula.

The successor of Baldwin, Henry of Flanders, in a letter to his brother, Godfrey of Hainaut, dated to September 1206, calls Kaloyan 'an enemy of the Holy Cross' (*Iohaniccio sancte cruces inimico crudeliter incarcerates*).¹⁰⁵ Apparently, although the union concluded between Bulgaria and the Catholic Church remained on paper, on the field, the Bulgarians were treated as adversaries. Here, however, a discrepancy can be spotted between the affairs of State and those of the Church. As he worked on a grand scale and with far-reaching ambitions, Innocent III did not anathematise Bulgaria as he did with John of England, who was excommunicated by Innocent in 1208 after refusing to accept Cardinal Stephen Langton as archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁰⁶ Such a misstep on the part of John concerning the appointment of a single cleric may have been a grave offence but remains incomparable to the destruction of an army made up of knights of the newly-founded Latin Empire and the disappearance of Baldwin in Kaloyan's dungeons. While the entire presence of the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe was jeopardised by Kaloyan's actions, his excommunication was not an option for Innocent because it would be tantamount to abandoning hope for a Catholic expansion among the peoples of Eastern Europe. This is perfect example of Pope Innocent's diplomatic brilliance.

Excommunication? By no means! On the contrary, the correspondence between Kaloyan and the pope continued and even remained seemingly benevolent in tone. Innocent wrote to Kaloyan: '...you won a glorious victory against those who were seeking to cause you trouble'.¹⁰⁷ What greater recognition and validation could Kaloyan have possibly have wished for than these words from the pope? The far-sightedness and the grand plans of Innocent III allowed him to sacrifice 500 heavily-armed knights and an emperor on the fields around Adrianople for the sake of making all Europe Catholic after the defeat of Byzantium. And

¹⁰⁵ Henry of Flanders. 'Letter to Godfrey of Hainaut from September 1206'. *FLHB*. Mihail Voynov, Vasil Guyzelev, Strashimir Lishev, Maria Petrova, Borislav Primov (eds.). Corpus IV, Sofia, 1981, p.13. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_013.html (Accessed 20.04.2018). My English translation.

¹⁰⁶ Sophie Ambler. *Stephen Langton*. University of West Anglia. Retrieved from: <http://magnacarta800th.com/schools/biographies/magna-carta-bishops/stephen-langton/> (Accessed 20.04.2018)

¹⁰⁷ Pope Innocent III. Letter to Kaloyan from August-September 1205'. *FLHB*, Corpus III, Sofia, 1965. Original text: '...per cuius merita gloriosum acquisisti triumphum adversus eos, qui te nitebantur graviter molestare'. p.364. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/3/gal/3_364.html (Accessed 20.04.2018). My English translation.

Bulgaria needed to be added to that puzzle, for it was a major piece, whose absence would have made the picture incomplete. In the end, Innocent III, being the brilliant strategist that he was, gladly lost a battle to win the war. Ultimately the political realism of Bulgaria's ruler prevailed over religious considerations, and Kaloyan declined to fulfil the papal request and release Baldwin. Astonishingly, this did not reflect in any way on his relations with the Papacy. The cooperation between the Bulgarian throne and the Holy See was a fact, and although there is no evidence of Western clerics operating in Bulgarian territory, there is a preserved letter dating from 1204 that attests to Kaloyan's willingness to further his contacts with the Catholic Church and with Western culture as a whole:

To your Holiness, I despatched two youths, one by the name of Basil, the other Bethlehem. May they be assigned, through your gracious will, to learn the Latin script, for here we have no grammarians capable of translating the letters that you send us. And once they have completed their studies, may they return to my kingdom.¹⁰⁸

In all probability, there had already been someone capable of translating the letters from and to Innocent III because correspondence flowed both ways, but what is apparent here is Kaloyan's intention to create a literary school based on the Latin language. By throwing wide his doors to Western culture and religion, despite his rivalries with the knights on the battlefield, Kaloyan seems to be sincere in his desire for communion with the Catholic Church. His ability to separate the religious from the political doctrine of his state with a view to securing for it the best possible place on the map of Europe portrays Kaloyan as a skilful diplomat and a master of statecraft. In retrospect, it is hard to tell what could have happened if his rule had not been violently interrupted in 1207.¹⁰⁹ At the time he was assassinated by conspirators from among his troops during the siege of Thessaloniki, he was only about forty. We can, therefore, only speculate as to the direction relations between Bulgaria and the Papacy would have taken had Kaloyan remained in power for another ten or fifteen years. The motives

¹⁰⁸ King Kaloyan 'Letter to Innocent III from November 1204'. *FLHB*, Corpus III, 1965, p.359. Original text: 'Misi autem ad tuam magnam sanctitatem pios duos, unus vero nominator Basilius, alius Bithlehem. Et denture ex percepto eius, ut addiscant in scholis littera Latinas, quoniam hic gram[m]aticos non habemus, qui possint litteras, quas mittitis nobis transferre, et postquam ipsi addicerint, remittantur ad imperium meum.' Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/3/gal/3_360.html (Accessed 20.04.2018). My English translation.

¹⁰⁹ Avner Falk. *Franks and Saracens: Reality and Fantasy in the Crusade*. Routledge, New York, 2010, p.165-166

of his assassins have never been clarified.¹¹⁰ Certainly, he had many enemies, but we should not overlook the possibility that people in his inner circle were riled or even scared by the prospect of losing their identity in favour of the hated Western schismatics. The shadow of the Great Schism hung over that assassination and over the Latin Empire's inability to conclude a strong alliance with Kaloyan. It was only natural for the knights of the Fourth Crusade to be perceived as invaders by Orthodox peoples and, therefore, treated with suspicion and resentment. But, considering the fact that they defeated Byzantium, Bulgaria's enemy for many centuries, the reasons for the problematic interactions between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire need to be explored at a deeper level.

Bulgaria had only just liberated itself from two centuries of Byzantine domination in 1186. The routing of Byzantium in 1204, therefore, benefited the Bulgarian kingdom because, after such a crushing defeat, what remained of the Byzantine Empire hardly had the capacity or even desire to reconquer and assimilate Bulgaria. The knights of the Fourth Crusade thus guaranteed the future of the young state, perhaps inadvertently. Cooperation between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire would have seemed quite normal in the context of their common enemies, the Empire of Nicaea and the Despotate of Epirus, but things did not work out that way. One reason for this was the 1054 schism, discussed above. But, despite all the skilful diplomacy of the pope and the dozens of letters he sent to Kaloyan, Boril I, Latin Emperor Henry, and Boniface of Montferrat, mutual mistrust between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire remained and the two sides never attained the level of cooperation that existed between, for instance, the knights of the Fourth Crusade and Venice. The ruler that ascended to the throne after Kaloyan, king Boril (1207 – 1218), after several years of war with the Latins, presented himself as a potentially good ally for both the Latin Empire and the Papacy.¹¹¹ Until this time, though, war was the only tool to resolve issues between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire. A letter written in September 1208 by Emperor Henry to Pope Innocent III, reads:

¹¹⁰ Alexandru Madgearu. *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire, 1185–1280*. BRILL, Leiden/Boston, 2017, p.168-169.

¹¹¹ John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. The University of Michigan Press, 1994. 'To seal the alliance Henry, a widower married Boril's "daughter" (in fact she was Kaloyan's daughter whom Boril had adopted when he married Kaloyan's widow). The wedding probably occurred in 1213. Soon thereafter Boril married Henry's niece, the daughter of Henry's sister.' p.100-101.

‘... on the eve of the Holy Day of St. Peter ad Vincula, we defeated the most unfair persecutor of the Church of God [Boril] at Philippopolis and chased him away from the camp, after which his men were summarily put to the sword....’¹¹²

Even under the reign of Boril, the attitude of Henry toward Bulgaria did not change – the Bulgarians were viewed as enemies of the Catholic Church. Yet, after several defeats on the battlefield at the hands of the knights of the Latin Empire, Boril concluded an alliance with them.

The king, perhaps influenced by the example of the Albigensian Crusade in the West, decided in 1211 to organise a Church council to condemn heretics. What has remained from this council is a document entitled *King Boril’s Synodicon*, which is highly informative about the state of the Bulgarian Church at that time (Figure 1).



Figure 1. King Boril’s Synodicon. Image: SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, Sofia, No. 4329. L. 200 ob- 201.

¹¹² Henry of Flanders. ‘Letter to Innocent III from September 1208’. *FLHB*, Corpus IV, 1981, p. 16. Original Latin text: ‘...vigilia ipsius Petri festi quod vocatur ad Vincula, iniquissimum persecutorem Ecclesiae Dei Vouliam apud Philippopolim debellavimis, eumque infinita strage facta suorum de campo fugavimis...’ Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_017.html (Accessed 13.04.2018). My English translation.

Although the *Synodicon* describes more than once the council as Orthodox, it also contains some distinctly Catholic postulates. According to the Creed of the Catholic Church, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son, while in the Orthodox canon, the Spirit proceeds from the Father only. The long preamble of anathemas reads as follows:

[To] all who make the Son of Our God, Jesus Christ, look smaller and not equal to His Eternal Father – anathema thrice.

[To he] who does not believe that the Holiest Spirit of God is equal in essence to the Father and Son – anathema thrice.¹¹³

The statement of the equality of the components in the Holy Trinity is perhaps the detail that reveals elements of canonical infiltration by Catholicism, which Bulgaria followed at this time.

The relations between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire became even closer in the years after this council. In 1213, Henry married Maria of Bulgaria, daughter of Kaloyan and stepdaughter of Boril. The next year, Boril left Kaloyan's former wife, a virtually unknown Cuman woman, to marry Elizabeth of Courtenay, the daughter of Peter II of Courtenay and Yolanda of Flanders. These two marriages at the highest dynastic level are evidence of a new orientation in Boril's foreign policy. He was definitely making a turn toward the West, which, however, was not appreciated by the majority of his Boyars, who deposed the king in 1218 after a seven-month siege of his capital city, Tarnovgrad (modern Veliko Tarnovo). The siege was led by Ivan Asen II, one of the most successful Bulgarian kings, who expanded the territory of Bulgaria to three times its original size, minted his own gold coins, and finally settled the issue of Bulgaria's religious affiliation

Around the year 1230, Bulgaria was fully within the fold of Catholicism as a result of the union concluded between king Kaloyan and Pope Innocent III in 1204. It was another five years, in 1235, before Bulgaria returned to the Eastern Orthodox camp (discussed in details in Chapter IV) and, at the time, there were no signs of such an eventuality. Ivan Asen II decided

¹¹³ Анна Мария Тотоманова (превела от старобългарски). 'Синодик на цар Борил'. Емил Димитров (ред.), *Сборник "Държава и Църква през XIII в."*, Славика Радомир, София, 1999г, с.79. Anna Maria Totomanova(translator from Old Bulgarian to modern Bulgarian) 'King Boril's Synodicon', Emil Dimitrov(ed.), *Corpus 'State and Church in XIII century'*, Slavica Radomir, Sofia, 1999, p.79. Original text: [На всички, които правят сина на нашия Господ Исуса Христа по-малък, а не равен на предвечния негов отец: - анатема трижди, и На този, който не изповядва, че пресветия Божия Дух е равносъществен с Отца и Сина, анатема: - трижди.]. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/psb/psb_2.htm (Accessed 18.04.2018). My English translation.

to build a church in his capital, Tarnovgrad in celebration of his triumphant victory at Klokotnitza over the Despotate of Epirus and the capture of the Despot, Theodore Komnenos. It is a well-known fact that Catholic and Orthodox churches differ in their architecture.¹¹⁴ The Latin cross church is predominant in Western Europe, while the church architecture in Eastern Europe is subordinated to the central-plan church. Available archaeological data provide us with the unique chance to discover the design of Ivan Asen's church *in situ*. A study of the Holy Forty Martyrs church at Tarnovgrad yields findings that explain exactly what happened and why there was a discrepancy between word and fact. Solely on the basis of data from written sources, it is impossible to reconstruct the behaviour of Bulgaria and the Latin Empire in its entirety. From the papal throne in Rome, everything seemed orderly: Bulgaria and the Latin Empire were two neighbouring Catholic states, tied by dynastic marriages and in a position to cooperate religiously as well as politically and militarily. However, archaeological findings say otherwise. The inscription of Tsar Ivan Asen II, which still appears on a marble column in the preserved Church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Tarnovgrad, reads as follows (Figure 2):

¹¹⁴ Zdenka Munzer. Medieval Church Architecture in Walachia. *Journal of the American Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 4 No. 3-4, Jul. - Oct., 1944, pp. 24-35. See also: Conrad Rudolph(ed). *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe. Companions in Art History*, Blackwell, Oxford, 2010.



Figure 2. The inscription of King Ivan Asen II in the [preserved] Church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Tarnovgrad. Image: Private archive of Angel Trendafilov (pictured).

In the year 6738 [1230], Indiction 3, We, Ivan Asen, in the Lord God true Tsar and Autocrat of the Bulgarians and son of the Elder Tsar Asen, erected from the ground upward and decorated with murals this most true church to the memory of the Forty Holy Martyrs, which whose aid in the twelfth year of our reign, during which this church was being decorated, we did war upon Romania and smote the Greek host and took the Tsar himself prisoner, being the Lord Theodore Comnenus, and all his boyars, and took all the tracts between Andrianople and Dyrrachium, being Greek, Albanian, and Serbian. The Franks held the towns of Constantinople alone and that city itself, yet they also bowed under the hand of our kingdom, for they had no other tsar

but us and spent their days thanks be to us, for such was the Lord's pleasure. For without the Lord, neither deeds nor words may come to pass, so praise be to him down the ages. Amen.¹¹⁵

The dating is beyond doubt. The column still stands inside the church, which has been thoroughly studied through several archaeological excavations over two decades. The words 'decorated with murals' are quite telling about the way the church looked inside: they are an indication of the existence of icons and mural paintings, whereas no such things existed in Catholic shrines. But these findings are far more definitive than the mere interpretation of the word 'murals'. Konstantin Totev, the leading archaeologist, explains:

In the course of our excavations on the grounds surrounding the church, we did not discover traces of a cultural layer containing materials and findings from the seventh-twelfth centuries. This means that not a single one of the main buildings or facilities on the site can be attributed to that time period. Above the stratigraphic layers identified so far is another layer in which mediaeval graves have been dug, containing items such as expensive jewellery, remains of clothing woven with gold thread, pottery, and other finds dating from the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries. When originally built, the church only comprised its present naos. It was a three-nave, three-apse church without a distinguishable separate narthex. The church had an articulated facade with three niches each from the north and south and two niches in the western facade, situated on the sides of the entrance. The most plausible assumption is that the church had a cross-in-square dome similar to that of already existing churches in the Royal Palace and the Patriarchate on Tzarevetz Hill.¹¹⁶ [Figure 3]

¹¹⁵ 'Tsar Ivan Asen II marble pillar from Tarnovgrad', Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, pp.120-121. Original text: [В(ъ)ДѢТОСЪ П Д ИѢНѢА;АЖАЮГ.ЧІНД(ИКТІ) Г ЫАЪІЗЪІW(ІННЪ)ІСѢНЪВЪХ(РИСТІ)Б(ОГ)ІВѢРНЪЦРЪІСІАМОДРЪЖЕЦЪБДЪІАРОМЪС(Ъ)НЪСТІА РОГОІСѢНЪЦРЪСЪЗДІХЪУТЪЗІЧАЛІІПІСІАНИЕМ(Ъ)ОУКРАСІХ(Ъ)ДОКОНЦІАПРЪЧ(Ъ)СТНЖЖСІЖ ЦРЪКВЪВЪІІАІС(ВА)ТЪІХЪ М ЫЖЮЪІМ(Ж)Ч(Ъ)Н(І)КЪІХЖЕПОМОЦІИЖВЪ І В ЫАЖЪДѢТОЦ(А)Р(Ъ)СТВАМОГОВ(Ъ)ІЕЖЕДѢТОПІСІАШЕСАХРАМЪСЪІЗДѢЗОХ(Ъ)НАБРАНЪВЪRW ІАНИЖІРІЗЕІХ(Ъ)ВОЇСКЖГРЪЦКЖІСІАМОГОЦРЪБКЮР(А)ΘОДОРІАКОМІНІАІАХ(Ъ)СЪВЪІІІБ ОДѢРЪІЕГОІЗЕІАВСАПРЪБАХЪУТЪОДРІАІАДОДРАЧЪГРЪЦКЖІЕЦЕЖЕАРЕІАІАСКЖІСРЪБСКЖЖ ТЪКМОСЖЦЫМ(Ъ) ГРАДОВОМ(Ъ) ОКР(Ъ)СТЪЦ(А)РЪГРІАД(А) ІСІАМОГОТОГОГРІАДРЪЖАХЖФРЖІНЪІТИПОД(Ъ)РЖКЖЦ(А)Р(Ъ)СТВАМОГО ПОВІНОВАХЖСАПОНЕЖЕІНОГОЦРЪБІІМЪХЖРІЗЕІІЕНЕІІМЪНОІАРІАДІД(Ъ)НІСВОІАІСПР ОВІАЖІАЦЕБЪХЖЕ(ОГ)ОУТІКОПОВЕДЪВЪШОУІЕОБЕЗ(Ъ) НЕГОІНІДЪІОНІСІОВОСЪВРЪШІАЕТЪСАТОМОУСІАВІАВЪВЪКЪІІМІІНЪ].

¹¹⁶ Константин Тотев. 'Царската църква "Св. 40 мъченици" и манастирът Великата лавра в Търновград. (Резултати от последните археологически разкопки)'. *Списание 'Археология'*, 2001, № 1-2, р. 30-44; [Konstantin Totev. 'The Tsars Church St. Forty Martyrs and the monastery The Great Lavra in Tarnovgrad. (The results from the last archaeological excavations)', *Archaeology magazine*, book 1-2, page 30-44]; Константин Тотев. 'Църквата "Св. 40 мъченици" във В. Търново според последните археологически разкопки 1992-1995 г.' *Списание "Минало"*, 1997, № 2, с. 41-53; Konstantin Totev. The Church 'St. Forty Martyrs' according to the last archaeological excavations', *Minalo (Past) Magazine*, 1997, book 2, p. 41-53.

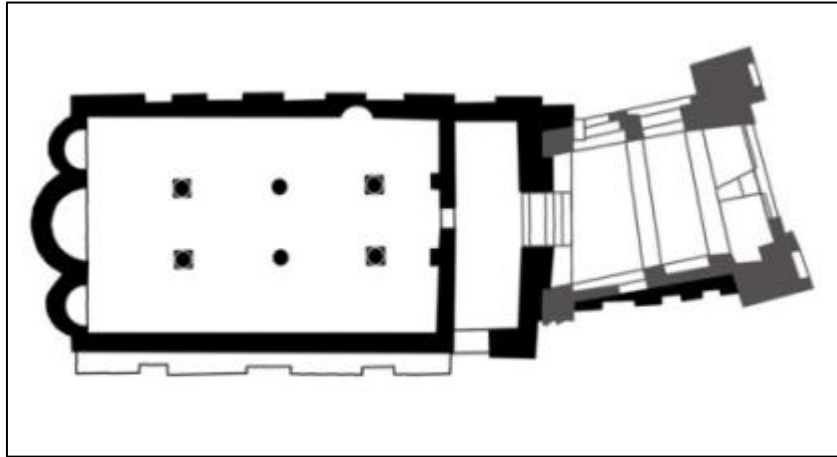


Figure 3. The Church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Tarnovgrad (Veliko Tarnovo), built in 1230. Image: Konstantin Totev.

Contemporary Catholic churches had the following floor plan and key architectural features (Figure 4):

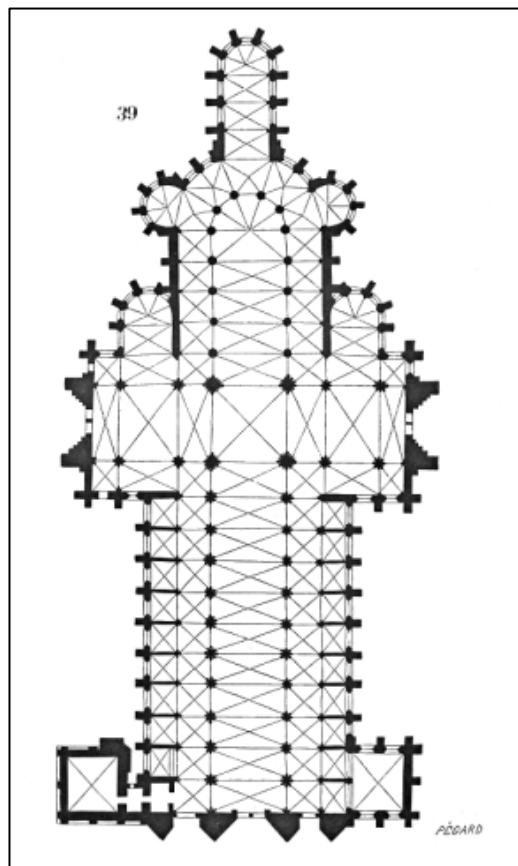


Figure 4. Roman Catholic cathedral in Rouen, Normandy build in 1208.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*. [Dictionary of French Architecture from 11th to 16th Century]. Édition BANCE — MOREL de 1854 à 1868 (1856), Volume 2, page 211; Retrieved from: https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Dictionnaire_raisonn%C3%A9_de_l%E2%80%99architecture_fran%C3%A7aise_du_XIe_au_XVIe_si%C3%A8cle/Architecture_religieuse (Accessed 13.04.2018).

It is impossible to confuse the Orthodox architectural style with the well-known Catholic style of the 'Latin Cross' found in Romanesque and Gothic churches in the West. The church built by Ivan Asen is a typical Eastern Orthodox design featuring a cross-in-square dome similar to the already existing churches in Bulgaria. The question inevitably arises: if Ivan Asen II had been a model Catholic, why would he build an Orthodox-style church? Even if he did lack the expertise, the Papacy would hardly have declined to supply qualified architects and builders, as it did with Catholic priests and missionaries, for such a godly undertaking as the building of a church in the capital of Catholic Bulgaria. No such assistance was ever requested and the church was built in the Eastern Orthodox tradition – something that a devout Catholic ruler would never have done.

Apart from identifying the architectural style and disclosing the intentions and actual religious affiliation of the Bulgarian king, what other useful information can archaeology yield in this case? For one thing, it reveals a match between the archaeological evidence and the date of the completion of the church as stated in the written source (the marble column): the early thirteenth century (since no earlier materials have been found). These findings and their analysis provide a completely new reconstruction of the chain of events immediately following the Fourth Crusade and explain in an indisputable manner the complex religious-political relationships between the Papacy, the Latin Empire, and Bulgaria. This type of analysis has never been undertaken before and its results are illuminating. While the Bulgarian king was not necessarily forced to use Western-style architecture, his decision to build a new church in the Orthodox style is telling. These details and the concurrence between archaeological and written sources, and historical analysis help reconstruct with clarity disputable or heretofore vague aspects of the turbulent history of the thirteenth-century Balkans.

In a missive sent to King Béla IV of Hungary, dated 27 January 1238, Pope Gregory IX brands Ivan Asen a schismatic:

Among their number [of the schismatics] is also Asen, who by abandoning the unity of the Church, by declining to be one of the sheep of Peter, by relinquishing his example and his life work, rose against the pasture of the Holy Community.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Pope Gregory IX. 'Letter to King Bela IV from 27 January 1238'. *FLHB*, Corpus IV, p.63. Original Latin text: 'De quorum numero perfidus est Assanus, qui ab ecclesie unitate recedens et de Petri ovibus esse recusans, euis pasci doctrine verbo operationis exemplo, et sacre communionis pabulo contradicit...' Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_064.html. (Accessed 13.04.2018). My English Translation.

This letter clearly reflects the fact that, after 1235, Bulgaria was no longer part of ‘the flock of St. Peter’ or ‘the Holy Community’.

Later evidence of the consequences of the schism and serious issues between Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Christians can be found in written sources dating from the mid-fourteenth century. In 1365, Pope Urban V established (probably at the request of Hungary) two Catholic bishoprics in the north-western Bulgarian kingdom of Vidin, which was occupied by Hungary at the time. Meanwhile, Louis I of Hungary summoned to these lands monks and preachers from the Franciscan vicarate in Bosnia. The results of their endeavours were impressive. Within five days, eight Franciscans managed to convert a large part of the population of the territory. In 1369, however, Vidin was conquered by Bulgarians and Bessarabians and the Franciscan monks were slaughtered, as we learn from a work of the Franciscan Bartholomeo de Pisa, written between 1385 and 1399:

In the vicarate of Bosnia and the Kingdom of Bulgarians, within the lands known as Vidinium, victims of the Greek monks were Father Andri the Magyar, a priest; father Grigory of Yadra, a priest; Father Nikolay of Markata, Father Benedict of the Kingdom and Father Toma, a layman from Fulgineum. Because, as they came here at the request of Louis I to bring the Bulgarians back into the fold of the only true faith, and gathered from this place the most abundant fruit, this was not to the liking of the Greek monks, and after Vidin was captured by the Bulgarians, the brothers mentioned herein, who were in vain put to the sword, attained martyrdom.¹¹⁹

Apparently, political and military superiority went hand-in-hand with religious affiliation. Once a Catholic ruler conquered lands inhabited by Orthodox peoples, one of the first tasks was to return the population to the ‘true faith’. But, some partial successes notwithstanding, they met with fierce resistance on the part of the people whom they were setting out to ‘save’, which in this case led to the deaths of the Franciscan monks. It is astonishing how many Christian lives were sacrificed on both sides of the divide for the sake of some minute details in the interpretation of the Creed.

¹¹⁹ Bartholomeo de Pisa. *De Conformitate Vitae Beati Francisci ad Vitam Domini Jesu*. Liber I. Fructus I–XII]. Plore Florentiam, 1906, p. 335–336; Original text: ‘In vicaria Bosnae et regno Bulgarorum in terra, quaedicitur Bidinium, passisunt frater Andreas Ungarussacerdos, frater Gregorius de Iadrasacerdos, frater Nicolaus de Marchia, frater Benedictus de Regno et frater Thomas laicus de Fulgineo Collogerisgraecis. Cum enim, ad petitionem Regis Ungariae Ludovici, ad reducendum ad fidem veram Bulgaros illuc accessissent et fructum maximum ibidem facerent, et hoc displiceret Collogerisgraecis, capto Bidinio per Bulgaros, fraters praefati per frusta concise martyrium compleverunt. pp.335-336 .Retrieved from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k114481w/f4.image>. (Accessed 10.05.2018). My English Translation.

Conclusion

The Great Schism of 1054 caused irreparable damage to the Christian world in the Middle Ages and continued to take a heavy toll in the centuries to come. The crossing of the Balkans by the knights of the first three crusades contributed to the formation of certain ethnic conceptions by both the Bulgarians and the Western Europeans towards one another, wherein it was not a sense of community but rather one of disparity in terms of the professed religion and system of values that remained dominant. The position of the Second Bulgarian kingdom relations with Catholicism and Orthodoxy is a telling example of the turbulent relations between the two churches in the early thirteenth century. Then, the future religious status of South Eastern Europe was decided once and for all. Manoeuvring between the diplomatic demands of the Bulgarian kings and the thirst for glory on the battlefield shown by the knights of the Fourth Crusade, Innocent III was the only key player to understand the exceptionally high stakes of this game. The Fourth Crusade marked a high point in the religious war between East and West, and the abyss it and the Latin Empire left behind remains incompletely bridged to this day, despite many gestures of goodwill on both sides.

Chapter III

The Fourth Crusade as Shown in Orthodox-Slavonic Written Sources

Introduction

To explore issues concerning the Fourth Crusade in all of its diverse aspects, we must focus more thoroughly on Orthodox-Slavonic written sources. As writings that represent the point of view of the victimised Orthodox community, Orthodox-Slavonic sources are extremely important for restoring historical truth. Long neglected and never studied properly by Western scholars, as is established above, these sources have yet to receive proper interpretation and integration into the historiography of the Fourth Crusade. Daniel Woolf discusses this phenomenon among Western historians more generally, stating that ‘the global dominance of Western academic historical practices is that not just history, but historiography, has been “written by the victors”’.¹

Information about this epoch can be drawn from different Orthodox writings: pilgrim’s diaries, hagiographical literature, chronicles, correspondence, annotations to transcriptions of earlier books, etc. Many of the writings to be considered in this study were written in Church Slavonic language between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries. It must be emphasised that the majority of these texts are of a profoundly religious nature and are brimming with surrealistic and plainly phantasmagorical elements. Although published in English for the first time in 2013, they are still not sufficiently studied or situated into the broader frame of the Fourth Crusade. As was mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, most of these sources are not included in the *The Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* edited by Graeme Dunphy. Of the extant Orthodox-Slavonic written sources, only the *Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks* (part of the *Novgorod Chronicle* of the fifteenth century), the *Nikon Chronicle*, the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle part of Galician-Volhynian Chronicle*, and the *Serbian Annals (Chronograph)* are included.² Ten works, some of which contain vital information relating to the Fourth Crusade, do not appear, including *The Life of the Martyrs of Zographou*, *The Latin Attack on Zographou*, *Hojdenie of Dobrinya*

¹ Daniel Woolf. ‘Historiography’. M. C. Horowitz (ed.), *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, Scribner’s, Detroit, 2005, p.xxxv.

² EMC, Graeme Dunphy (ed.) 2010, pp., 164, 223, 658, 820, 1131, 1150, 1157, 1228, 1245, 1291, 1351, 1373, 1384.

Andreikovich, Bishop Antony Novgorodski, The Chronograph by Mikhail Moxa, The Panegyric of Mikhail Voin, The Life of Philoteia, Panegyric of John Polyvotski, the Life and Small Praise of St. Ivan Rilski, The Prologue Life of Saint Petka, The Life of St. Simeon – Nemanja, and an anonymous travelers account from late thirteenth century. The four sources that are included have no English translation or references. This is another obstacle that Western scholars face when dealing with such sources. Snezhana Rakova's book is an excellent source for anyone willing to take a more thorough look at this wealth of written information.³ The book is 292 pages long including 128 pages bi-lingual appendixes. In-depth historical analysis of the important details that come to the surface is much needed, some of which may hold the key to as yet unresolved cases, while others contain surprising new facts. Nevertheless, as far as actual events are concerned, these documents are fairly accurate and eloquent in their descriptions. The written heritage of the Slavic peoples is far from insignificant. In the process of seeking information about knightly campaigns, this author came upon facts that may offer logical solutions to unresolved issues and, in some cases, add new and heretofore unfamiliar details to the history of the Fourth Crusade. This chapter will look at the extant Orthodox-Slavonic written sources in chronological order to determine how the Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox world looked on the eve of the Fourth Crusade and in the aftermath of the capture of Constantinople.

Constantinople: the spiritual capital

To realise fully the significance of Constantinople for Orthodox Christians, one must first know how it was perceived during the Middle Ages. There was a tradition among the Orthodox community to go on pilgrimages to the cradle of Eastern Orthodoxy, Constantinople, just as there was – and still is – a custom of undertaking journeys to the Tomb of Christ in Jerusalem and to other places of worship in the Holy Land. As centuries went by, Constantinople accumulated a great number of Christian relics and unique churches and monasteries were built in the city that left an indelible impression on every foreign visitor. Having survived numerous sieges, Constantinople had accumulated its wealth and beauty untouched by enemy hands. As capital of the mighty Byzantine Empire, the city drew enormous riches, which were reflected in all levels of society and in culture and architecture. Logically, Constantinople became the focal point of the entire Orthodox faith, a model to be admired and emulated.

³ Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013.

There is a separate genre in Old Slavonic literature called *hojdenia* ('Journeys') that records the travels of pilgrims who visited Constantinople and described their personal impressions of the wonders of the city. Most of these were written in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and have since been published in modern Russian.⁴ The earliest- and best-known *hojdenia* came from the pen of a Russian pilgrim in the year 1200, a mere four years before the fall of Constantinople and the wholesale devastation of Orthodox churches and monasteries. The author was a certain Dobrynya Andreikovich, who later became (twice) the archbishop of Novgorod under the name of Antony Novgorodski. He wrote the book *Kniga Palomnik* – also known as the *Hojdenie of Dobrynya Andreikovich, Bishop Antony Novgorodski* – in which he tells of his journey to Constantinople and his impressions of the city.⁵ His description is extremely interesting and complete, which explains the numerous later copies of the text where additions have been made to complement the story. Of course, later editions include the fall of the city into the hands of the crusaders. But how did Bishop Antony describe Constantinople? His book reads like an inventory of hundreds of relics located in the grounds of the city's churches and monasteries. These were treasures that defied the imagination of the man and remain unimaginable even today. Here is just a sample of his description:

In the golden Royal Palace are to be found: the True Cross, the crown of thorns, the sponge, the nails, the blood and the robe, the lance, the cane, the swaddling clothes, and the girdle of the Mother of Christ, the shirt of Christ, His scarf, the cloth and sandals, the head of Paul and the body of apostle Philip, the head of Epimachus and the relics of Theodore Tyro, the right hand of John the Baptist, used to proclaim tsars in office, also [an] iron sceptre with [a] cross atop it, with which they bless new tsars, the shroud with the image of the Christ, and the two keramidia (not made by human being), the marble basin of Christ and another smaller one, also marble, in which Christ washed the feet of His disciples, and two large True Crosses. All these are found in a small church dedicated to Our Most Sacred Lady.⁶

⁴ Николай Прокофьев. *Русские хождения XII-XV вв.* МГПИ им. В.И. Ленина, Москва, 1970; [Nikolay Prokofiev. *Russian Journeys 12-15th century.* MGPI named V.I.Lenin, Moskva, 1970].

⁵ Ольга Белоброва. 'Книга Паломник Антония Новгородского'. *Византийские очерки*, кн. 3, Изд-во Академии, Москва, 1977, с.225-235. [Olga Belobrova. 'Book Palomnik of Antony from Novgorod'. *Byzantine essays*, Academy Publishing, Moscow, 1977, p.225-235].

Алексей Лидов. *Восточнохристианские реликвии*. Издательство "Прогресс-Традиция, Москва, 2003, с. 387-397; [Alexey Lidov. *Eastern chirstian relics*. Progres-Tradition Publishing, Moskva, 2003, pp. 387-397]. See also: George Majeska, *Russian Pilgrims and the Relics of Constantinople*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, No. 56, 2003 Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C., p.93-108.

⁶ 'Archbishop Antony of Novgorod's Pilgrim's Book', Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013. Original text: [Се же во царскихъ златыхъ полатяхъ крестъ честный, венецъ, гоуба, гвозди; кровь же лежаше

Another text, the *Novgorod Chronicle* (or the *Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks*) is a fairly accurate document in which the names of characters, the sequence of events, and the topographic details all suggest that it was written by an eyewitness or is the oral testimony of a witness reporting the events surrounding the fall of Constantinople.⁷ The importance of this narrative is the fact that it was included in later Slavic texts, such as the *First Sofia Chronicle*, the *Voskresenska*, *Gustinska*, and *Tverska Chronicle*. According to Rakova, the text offers important details that are absent from all known Latin sources. For example, it records an attempt to take advantage of the confusion in Constantinople to proclaim a Byzantine military commander, Nicholas, emperor:

After the death of Isaac, the people rose against his son for the burning of the city and the sacking of the monasteries. And so, the crowd gathered and summoned prominent men to proffer advice as to who should be tsar. And all wanted Radinos. But the latter did not want to reign and took holy orders so as to hide from them. They caught his wife and took her to Hagia Sophia and asked her for a long time: "Tell us where thy husband is!" And she did not betray him. Then they brought a man by the name of Nicholas and betrothed him to the realm without a patriarch validating and thereafter conferred [sic] at Hagia Sophia for six days and six nights.⁸

Radinos turned down the offer and the crowd nominated Nicholas without the patriarch's blessing. His rule lasted a mere six days before he was captured by Alexius V Mourtzouphlus. Nicholas must be Nicholas Kanabos, who was dragged out of Hagia Sophia and strangled on

инага; багряница, копие, трость, повой святцыа Богородицы и пояс, и срачица Господня, плат шейный, и лентий, и калиги Господня; глава Павлова и апостола в/ Филиппа тело, Епимахова глава, и Феодора Тирона мощи, роука Иоанна Крестителя правага, и тою царя по ставляют на царство; и посох железен, а на нем крест, Иоанна Крестителя, и благославляют на царство; и оуброус, на немже образ Христов; и керемиде две, и лохана Господня мороморана, и друугаа лохана меньшаа мраморана же, в нейже Христос оумыл нозе оучеником; и креста два велика честнаа. Сеже все во единой церкви в малей, во святей Богородицы.].р.191.

⁷ Петр Бицилли. *Новгородское сказание от IV-том Крестовом походе*. Ф.Б.Успенский(сост.) Избранные исторические работы, Москва, Reprinted 2006 from 1916 edition, стр.603-608; 'Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks', Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, pp. 167-169. See also: Robert Michel and Nevill Forbes (trans.) *The Chronicle of Novgorod: 1016-1471*, Camden Third Series, Vol.25, London, 1914; Graeme Dunphy and Cristian Bratu (eds). *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*. Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2010, pp. 1157-1158.

⁸ 'Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks'. Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013. Original text: [Іо Ісаковѣ же смерти а дие на сына его вѣста а про зажъжение градънои за пограбление монастырьское. И събра ес ернь, и воло ахоу добрыѣ моужи, доума же с ними, кого есар постав тѣ. И вси хот хоу Радиноса. Онѣ же нехот е арства, нѣ крѣ ес от нихѣ, измѣнивѣс въ ѣрны ризы. Женоу жеего, имѣ е, приведо а въ св тоу Софи и много ноуди а. Іовѣжъ намѣ, кдеестъ моуж твои. И не сказа о моужи своемъ. Іотомъ же а еловѣка, именъмъ Николоу, воинна, и на того възложи а вѣнь ь бес патриарха, и тоу бысть снемѣвъ св тѣи Софин .зс. днии и .зс. но ни.].р.168.

its steps.⁹ This level of detail suggests strongly that the text was written by an eyewitness – there are no means by which such a small but significant detail could have come to the attention of someone outside the besieged city, much less one speaking a Slavonic language! These facts have also been described in the brief Byzantine chronicles, which provides further proof of their authenticity.¹⁰ Additionally, it seems that the author of *Novgorod Chronicle* was aware of the edict that Innocent III issued after the fall of Zara that forbade any further attacks on Christian cities, especially Constantinople. The author writes: ‘Then the Franks were overcome with grief, for they had broken [the edict]: the German emperor and the Roman pope had told them not to inflict evil to Constantinople’.¹¹ ‘Фряги’ is one of the many names used for crusaders, a derivative of the word ‘Franks’. ‘Tsarigrad’ is the Slavonic name for Constantinople, widely used to this day among the Slavic peoples to denote present-day Istanbul. It means ‘the King’s City’ or ‘the Royal City’, i.e. the seat of the King (emperor) of the first and largest Orthodox country in the world and the Supreme Patriarch of Orthodox Christianity. Without playing down their own tsars and capital cities, or their patriarchs, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Russians referred to Constantinople as Tsarigrad with the deepest reverence and the deepest respect.

Does the above quotation indicate a certain willingness to forgive the Catholic Pope Innocent III and the German king Philip of Hohenstaufen of Swabia? As can be seen, the Orthodox author was familiar with the factions and processes within the crusader armies.

The broken edict implies that the pope was innocent in respect to the actions of the crusaders on the Fourth Crusade. Whether Innocent III himself, always the seasoned diplomat, had issued this edict as insurance against future accusations is beside the point – the implication is that the crusaders had wilfully embarked on an undertaking that was ungodly. The next quote proves that:

The Franks and all their voivods [leaders] thought only of that gold and silver which Isaac’s son had promised them, and forgot the order of the tsar and of the pope. When they entered the

⁹ Jonathan Phillips. *The Fourth Crusade and the Siege of Constantinople*. pp. 222-226.

¹⁰ Peter Schreiner. ‘Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken’. Bd.II: *Historischer Kommentar*, CFHB XII Teil II, Wien, 1977, p182-188.

¹¹ ‘The Anonymous Russian Account of the capture of Constantinople by the Franks’. Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.25.

Golden Horn, they first broke the iron chains, and as they advanced upon the city, set fire to it from four sides.¹²

What a brilliant example of even-handed cause-and-effect analysis by an ancient Slavic writer! Gold and silver were, in his view, the key motivation for the leaders of the Fourth Crusade, who, in clear breach of the orders issued by the pope and their king, succumbed to temptation and looted the city. Again, the pope is exonerated and all blame is directed at the leaders of the crusade. But who were they, according to the text? The author does not omit to describe them.

The author of the *Novgorod Chronicle* names some of the principal leaders of the Fourth Crusade with great accuracy and detail in this brief passage:

...prime among them [was] the Marquess of Rome of the city of Verona, where once dwelled that cruel pagan Teodoric. And second is the kondoff Oflander. And third is the blind doge of the island of Marco in Venice. This doge was blinded by the Tsar Manuel....¹³

In other words, he mentions Count Baldwin of Flanders [*kondoff Oflander*], Marquess Boniface of Montferrat, and the Venetian doge, Enrico Dandolo. For some reason, the author associates Rome with Theoderic, who ruled the city in the sixth century. The allusion here is probably that, even after all these centuries, things had not changed significantly and Italy continued to bring forth cruel rulers, if not pagans, then at least schismatics. Notably, the author also does not make a distinction between 'pagan' and 'schismatic', with both concepts used interchangeably to describe the 'Franks' or 'Latins'. Baldwin ranks second, which to a large extent reflects the actual division of power in the crusader army, although later he was chosen as emperor. The author also mentions Enrico Dandolo, who had been blinded by the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I in 1172 during a diplomatic mission to Constantinople.¹⁴ Dandolo's personal motivation and desire for revenge should not be underestimated. Donald M. Nicol points to this possibility: 'As his eyesight faded so his wits sharpened and his hatred of the

¹² 'The Anonymous Russian Account of the capture of Constantinople by the Franks'. Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.29.

¹³ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁴ Antonino Lombardo. 'Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice'. *Encyclopedia Britannica online*, 1998: 'The following year [1172], with the Byzantine ambassador, he[Dandolo] went again to Constantinople, where, according to one account, he was so assiduous in defending the interests of the Venetians that the Emperor had him blinded.' Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Enrico-Dandolo> (Accessed 14.04.2018).

Greeks became obsessive'.¹⁵ The listing of these personages and the facts associated with them testifies to the fact that the author had access to a wealth of information that he skilfully used to support his negative depiction of the leaders of the Fourth Crusade.

To complete this picture, the *Novgorod Chronicle* does not fail to examine in considerable detail the looting of Hagia Sophia, the largest church in the world at this time:

And on the morrow, upon sunrise, the Franks entered Hagia Sophia and tore off the doors, and broke them up, and the ambo, and clad in silver and the dozen silver pillars, and the four pillars of the Ark of the Covenant; and did break up the altar table, and the dozen crosses that rose over the altar, and the pillars, like a trees taller than a man between them, and the altar partitions between the pillars, and all was of silver. And they pluck away the wondrous holy table, and did remove therefrom jewels and precious stones, and took it nobody knows where. And they pillaged 40 large vessels that stood before the altar, and incense burners, and silver lamps without count, and priceless devotional vessels. And the liturgical Gospel, and the true crosses, and priceless icons: all that they tore off. And under the holy table they found a secret hiding-place and in it almost 40 kads¹⁶ of pure gold, and in the galleries and upon the walls, and [came upon] in the vessel store untold gold and silver and costly bejewelled vessels.¹⁷

It also describes with a fair amount of accuracy the division of the Byzantine Empire and its wealth among the victors:

And in May upon the ninth day, they made one of their Latins tsar – one kondo Flarenda, with his bishops, and they share power: to the tsar the city, to the marquess the Golden Horn, and to the doge a tithe. In this manner perished the realm of the City of Constantine protected by God and the Greek land because of the quarrels of the tsars, and the Franks rule that land.¹⁸

Once again, the author accurately conveys the events surrounding the choice of an emperor – it was done by a collective decision. The percentages of the distribution of spoils are not particularly accurate, but this is beside the point. In the final sentence, there is an attempt by the author to accept the blame for the sacking, something quite typical in this deeply religious

¹⁵ D.M.Nicol. *Byzantium and Venice: A study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, p.119-120.

¹⁶ Old Slavic quarten. 'Kad' is ancient barrel wrought with iron rings. The usual weight of this barrel is 12-14 puds. One pud is 16.38kg. The total weight of one kad is approximately 212 kg.

¹⁷ 'The Anonymous Russian Account of the capture of Constantinople by the Franks'. Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2003, p.173.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.30.

age. Constantinople fell victim to infighting among Greek kings according to this excerpt, which is, in fact, quite close to the historical truth. If we are to assume that the crusaders were the weapon used by Alexius IV on his way to the throne, then the key reason for the fall of Constantinople must have been the internecine war fought between him and Alexius V Mourtzouphlus.¹⁹

The full text of the *The Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks* is an extremely important and valuable written source, at least on a par with Robert de Clari's *La Conquête de Constantinople*. In a precise manner, this Orthodox-Slavonic written source describes and complements the story of the Fourth Crusade and the capture of Constantinople without unnecessary dramatism or pejorative qualifications.

The aftermath of the Fourth Crusade

Quite logically, the question arises: what was the situation in the conquered city once all the fires were extinguished and the dead buried? How did the capital city revert back to its everyday routine? The profound grief of Orthodox Christians and, particularly, the Greek people was beyond doubt: hundreds of priceless relics had been lost, monuments of culture and symbols of the city had been destroyed, a millennium-old history had been ruthlessly disrupted. But did the crusaders continue to conduct themselves as ruthlessly once the city became the capital of their own Latin Empire? Despite their unexpected success, the participants in the Fourth Crusade probably realised that the numerical superiority of the inhabitants of Constantinople was enormous and the odds of a devastating rebellion breaking out were significant. How did this awareness impact their conduct? An unexpected reply to this question can be found in two Orthodox-Slavonic texts.

One such source is the anonymous account of the narrative of Antoni Novgorodski, discussed above. This transcript was made somewhere in the late thirteenth-early fourteenth century, according to the scholars Nikolay Prokofiev and George Majeska.²⁰ Later additions were made to it by an anonymous scribe who discloses an important detail: 'This icon did weep when the Franks took Constantinople and whilst they held it for 62 years, yet tormented no man for his faith'.²¹ The weeping icon epitomises the profound pain and insult inflicted upon the locals by the conquering crusaders. However, immediately after this passage, the author

¹⁹ Thomas F. Madden. *The Concise History of the Crusades*, 2014, p.108.

²⁰ Николай Прокофьев, *Русские хождения XII-XV вв.*, с.257-267. [Nikolay Prokofiev. Russian Journeys XII – XV c., pp.257-267]. See also: George Majeska, *Russian Travellers to Constantinople 14th -15th c.*, p.128-155.

²¹ 'Anonymous travelers account from late 13th c.' Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2003. p. 42.

clarifies that the Franks who controlled the city for 62 years, did not harass anyone because of their faith. This is not an entirely accurate account in terms of the actual duration of their rule, which was fifty-nine years, but considering the fact that the text was written much later, such a minor inaccuracy is forgivable. More important is the statement that the Franks ‘tormented no man for his faith’.

In reality, the higher Orthodox clerical leadership in Constantinople was replaced with a Catholic administration and, for the most part, Orthodox monks and priests were subjected to persecution and murdered during the sack of Constantinople, as described below. As we read in *The Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks*:

And other churches within the city and without, and monasteries within the city and without the city, all suffered plunder, and we can neither count them, nor tell of their beauty. They did rob the monks and nuns and priests, killing some of them, and did chase other Greeks and Varangians from the city.²²

Apparently, once the devastation in the city was over, the knights changed tack and put an end to their aggressive policy, at least in respect to the regular citizenry, and refrained from enforcing their own version of Christianity upon the populace. Doing so would have been a grave error, which was probably realised by Baldwin’s successor, Henry, after his brother’s defeat at the battle of Adrianople by the Bulgarian king Kaloyan in 1205. This battle managed to weaken the Latin Empire just a year after it was established. Any religious unrest within Constantinople would have been undesirable for Henry of Flanders, who had lost his brother and the ‘*crème de la crème*’ of the crusader army. Compared with such disastrous events, religious differences were by far the lesser evil and the knights had to accept this fact in order to keep the peace in the city.

Another Orthodox-Slavonic text, the Russian *Nikon Chronicle*, dated between 1539 and 1542, brilliantly describes the situation in Constantinople:

The same year came Germans, Venetians and Franks against Constantinople with a host. And they stood before the city from the month of December until the month of May, and did take it with great force during the month of May, upon the ninth day, and installed their faith into it, and bishops and presbyters, and also rules and laws and decrees in accord with their custom,

²² ‘The Anonymous Russian Account of the capture of Constantinople by the Franks’. Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.173.

and many Greeks adopted their custom and, simply stated, all was accomplished and everything came to pass in the Roman custom and law in Constantinople; books and laws and rules all were taken to Rome to the pope, and all was according to the Roman decree.²³

Although written many years after the events it describes, this text provides a highly credible account. The author surely used earlier written sources since the text directly copies from *The Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks*, which predates it by three centuries. Interestingly, the author presents an accurate account of the largest ethnic groups involved in the Fourth Crusade: Germans, Venetians, and Franks. These were definitely the biggest ethnic groups involved in that undertaking. The chronicler also describes with utmost clarity the replacement of secular and religious authority in Constantinople with 'Roman custom and law', 'according to Roman decree'. The narrative does not omit the great loss that Orthodoxy suffered: 'books and laws and rules all were taken to Rome to the pope'. Without a doubt, these words were meant to describe the plunder of countless church relics and other valuables that were carried westwards by the crusaders. In addition, this text describes an important detail, indicative of the situation in Constantinople, that many Greeks converted to the Roman tradition. It is unknown whether their conduct was motivated by fear, by hope for some personal benefit, or was entirely voluntary. Judging by a much later Wallachian text, *The Chronograph* by Mikhail Moxa, who wrote in 1620, fear was the motivation for the subjugated Greek population to adopt the Catholic rite. His text states that:

In the year 6710 [1202] the Franks seized Constantinople from the Greeks and did hold it 62 years and out of fear of the Franks the Greeks did pray for the pope in their churches. Then the Greeks did receive [just desserts] also from the Bulgarians, who did sack the realm. They also gave relics of St. Petka in place of a ransom and also many other precious gifts.²⁴

Apart from the slightly incorrect date, which is easy to explain in view of the distance in time, and the information regarding the ransom paid to the Bulgarians (a fact that will be explored in greater detail later in the thesis), this text contradicts the previous two. This goes to show that, even among Orthodox-Slavonic authors, there was no prevailing opinion as to how the

²³ 'The Nikon Chronicle';. Snezhana Rakova *FCHMEOS*, p. 217.

²⁴ Mikhail Moxa. 'Chronograph'. Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013. Original text: [Презъ годината ꙗко (ажюж) отнели Франките Цариград от Гърците и го държали ꙗко години и от страхъ предъ Франките Гърците оупоменавали Папата в църквите; тогава ꙗко дошли ѡрешоуъ Гърците и от Славѡните, които завладели тѡхната земя. Тогава съшо така били предадени моштите на св.Петка вместо данъкъ и други тѣвѣрде драгоцени оутвариъ.] p.154.

Catholic faith was imposed on the conquered peoples. As we examine the issue from all perspectives, we must admit that both scenarios were plausible. Fear will always remain a potential motivator, especially considering the bloody conquest of Constantinople. It appears, however, that after the initial calamities in the city, according to the other two written sources, some sections of society sought compromise and coexistence with their conquerors. Written by Orthodox Christians, the words ‘the [Franks] did not harass anyone on account of their faith’ and ‘many Greeks adopted their [the Roman Catholic] tradition’ acquire special significance. Obviously, when the war was over, both sides took the necessary steps to establish a kind of normal co-existence. These two texts enrich our knowledge of the fall of Constantinople and the events that followed in its wake in a new way. An unbiased analysis of these little-known sources reveals details and prompts conclusions beyond those reachable by Western scholars, who have no access to or familiarity with the sources in question. In contrast, the great majority of Orthodox scholars condemn such conclusions as downright treason. But the facts speak for themselves.

Of course, not all was perfect in the thirteenth century within the territory of the former Byzantine Empire. There are other Orthodox-Slavonic written sources that provide supplemental information on Fourth Crusade. The Bulgarian patriarch, Euthymius (ca. 1325 – 1402), whose seat was in the capital city of Tarnovgrad from 1375, was the author of many texts, of which about fifteen have survived to the present.²⁵ He was an active writer between 1375 and 1393 and the texts considered below are written from this period. One of these is entitled *The Panegyric of Mikhail Voin* and is based on an earlier hagiography edited by Euthymius. Mikhail Voin was an Orthodox saint worshipped by Bulgarians and Serbs alike. The text contains information about the Fourth Crusade:

Not much later war loomed, and war much more cruel than any hitherto. For at that time, and with divine blessing, for only the Lord knows the reason, the Romans entirely took the Greek nation even unto taking for many a year the royal City of Constantine and all the lands around it.²⁶

²⁵ Емил Калужняцки. *Съчиненията на Българският Патриарх Евтимий (1375-1393)*. Издателство ПИК, Велико Търново, 2011. [Emil Kałużniacki. *Sačinenija na bałgarskija Patriarch Evtimij (1375-1393)*. Izdatelstvo PIK, Veliko Tarnovo, 2011].

²⁶ Patriarch Euthimius. ‘The Panegyric of Mikhail Voin’. Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p. 85.

Here, too, the crusaders are identified with Romans. Rakova, the text's modern editor, rightly draws attention this, explaining that 'The "Romans" here are not "Romaioi" of conventional usage – Roman in the sense of Byzantine; they are instead Latins'.²⁷ The war is described as exceptionally cruel at a time when wars were a daily fact of life. Further in the text, it is mentioned that the Bulgarian king Kaloyan brought the remains of St. Mikhail Voin to his capital. This information is instrumental to the accurate dating of this text and the events described in it.

Another work by Patriarch Euthymius, entitled *The Life of Philoteia* and dedicated to a canonised saint, reads as follows:

After much time passed and many a miracle was performed, the Greek realm grew feeble and those who governed it grew greatly vexed. For it was then that Romans judged the time right to rise cruelly and to deliver unendurable calamity to the Greek authority. At that time the Bulgarian realm, for it was firm and very powerful, did rise and conquer all lands around it. It was then that the devout and most glorious Tsar Kaloyan wielded his royal authority most properly and magnificently. And when he saw that the Greek realm was entirely feeble, he did rise against it to seize and sack many a city and village. All valuables that were there he gathered and took to his glorious city of Tarnovo and all men and moreover livestock he settled within his realm.²⁸

The situation described here is identical: the treatment of the Greek authorities by the crusaders was 'cruel'. Further along in the text, however, it becomes apparent that the author had no excessive compassion for his Orthodox brethren, the Greeks. Being Bulgarian, Euthymius naturally praised the victories and successful campaigns of the Kaloyan 'over all neighbouring lands', whether Orthodox or Catholic. There is direct evidence that 'all valuables' – most probably church relics and holy remains, such as those of St. Philoteia – had been brought to Tarnovgrad according to the same source. Kaloyan was known for his passion for collecting holy remains in his capital – the methods he employed toward that end were often quite ruthless.²⁹ It was believed at the time that the more holy remains of saints a city possessed, the better protected it was against enemies, because the saints would guard it and keep it safe from

²⁷ Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013 p. 86

²⁸ Patriarch Euthymius. 'The life of Philoteia' Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, pp.86-88; Original text in: Emil Kaluzniacki, Viena, 1901, pp.78-99.

²⁹ Иван Дуйчев. *Българско средновековие*. София, Наука и Изкуство, 1972, с.430; Ivan Duychev. *Bulgarian Middle Ages*. Sofia, Nauka i Izkustvo, p. 430. Duychev says: 'After the fall of Constantinople to the knights of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, Tarnovo became for a time the main centre of Orthodoxy. The Bulgarian emperors were zealously collecting relics of Christian saints to boost the prestige of their capital'.

invasion. Being an Orthodox Christian, although closely linked to the heathen Cumans, Kaloyan shared this belief and spared no effort to acquire more and more holy remains. Clearly, it was common practice for such remains to change hands from the defeated to the victorious side in a conflict – this practice was certainly not confined to the crusaders, although the sheer scale of plunder of holy remains and church relics and their transfer from Constantinople to the West was without precedent.

Euthymius also describes in detail the battle at Adrianople in 1205, when the crusader army was routed and Latin Emperor Baldwin of Flanders was taken prisoner by Kaloyan. This is the masterly description that we find in the *Panegyric of John Polyvotski*.³⁰

Many years hence, when the might of the Bulgars rose under the pious Tsar Kaloyan, the entire Greek land fell under him. Then the Franks tribe seized Tsarigrad (Constantinople) and more overtook the entire Greek authority even having a tsar of their own kin. When the Bulgarian Tsar Kaloyan heard that the said man had gone to Adrianople, he hastened to the city of Philip (Philippopolis) and captured it with great artifice. For he sent warriors to Adrianople that they should fall prisoner whilst concealing his great host elsewhere. And the tsar named Baldwin, whom the Franks appointed, since he knew not of the concealment, hastened against them joined only by those who were at his side at the time. And those whom he pursued appeared to flee until they led him amidst the Bulgar host. And suddenly, from all sides, there came Bulgars and captured him and took him to Tarnovo and put him to death.³¹

From the *Panegyric*, we learn about the military strategy of Kaloyan, which secured his victory over the most eminent and powerful knights of the epoch. The military tactic of deceit involved a surprise ambush following a long pursuit, where the knights' army was lured into chasing the light Cuman cavalry. The ends justified the means and Baldwin fell with all his army into the

³⁰ Климентина Иванова. 'Похвалното слово за Йоан Поливлотски от Евтимий Търновски', *сп. Старобългарска литература*. Кн. 1, 1971, с. 30 – 53. Original Bulgarian text in: Kaluzniacki, Emil, *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthimius (1375-1393) nach den Besten Handschriften*. Carl Gerold's Sohn, Viena, 1901, pp.181-202.

³¹ Patriarch Euthymius. 'Panegyric of Ioan Polyvotski'. Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.87. Original text: [По **Д**аннигми)(ж л-кт-к, вънегда при влагочктив клл цари **К**алотиник **Б**ългарскмй възвеличи са ршг и гск **Г**ръчскаа зел лк под того ракод; покоржа **Б**кастѣкъ. Рѣдоуу вий **Ф**рлжсколюуу тогда **Ц**ариград пркел шоуу, такожд!и **В**асѣ **Г**ръчскѣи **С**лѣстк ижг **И** царѣ поставиш **И** йит кѣил кна своего. вгоже царк **Б**ългарскмй **К**алотшаннѣ въ **С**Одринѣ пришадша ооув кд кѣц, въ скор-к **Ф**тлгповк град **П**юСТИЖА и хмтростТл л ногод; **ТОГО** йтъ. **К**мнѣк ви; тогда **А**гако на пѣ-кнк въ **С**ддринѣ поела, вийскѣч же в(Дал; въ **Д**аѣжѣст к) нкктормихъ съкрмтк. **Ц**арк же, ижа ит **Ф**рлжг“ поставѣжмй, **Б**алдоуувинк илаѢ(Дак, съкрѣвжмл лксти не вкдк!, въ скор к съ иж(тогда сълооучкижѣи са на на **П**юТАЧА. **О**ни жѣ ико **Б**-кжлѣб тѣаир кѣл са, дондѣже того къ вийск дов(доша. и ави йит въслчдоуу **Б**ългаре сът(кш(**С**ѣ, **ТОГО** йша и въ **Т**ръНШѢк **П**риВ(ДОШД; **И** съѣрѣти прдаш.].

trap set for him. Most of his men were killed and Baldwin was taken prisoner. The *Panegyric* contains yet another very important piece of information: The Latin Emperor Baldwin of Flanders was taken to Tarnovgrad and 'put to death', i.e., executed. This is perhaps the only credible source concerning the plight of the first emperor of the Latin Empire after his capture. None among the Western chroniclers had any clear idea as to what fate befell him. Widespread opinion is that Baldwin died in captivity.³² But how? Patriarch Euthymius, as the supreme clerical leader in the capital city of the country where Baldwin was taken prisoner, would have had a clear idea what had happened to the emperor and probably had access to documents that have since been lost. Although the text in question was written 170-180 years after the events of 1205. The fate of Baldwin was probably public knowledge or even legend. But the writings of Patriarch Euthymius were surely based on more solid information than legends and, as head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, his word carried a lot of weight. On account of the relatively short span of time and the lofty position of Euthymius as patriarch, it is safe to assume that the story of Baldwin's fate is true. There are speculations and assumptions for the tragic end of Baldwin, but this is the first source from official Bulgarian institution telling us what happened to him. This is not the speculation; this is the first trustworthy confirmation. After all the Bulgarians know what they did to Baldwin.

The *Panegyric* also reveals more information regarding the controversial religious decisions of the Bulgarian kings. This is mention of Ivan Asen II (1218-1241), who 'completely reaffirmed the Orthodox Faith'. The 'Panegyric for John Polyvotski' states: 'After him[Kaloyan] there reigned Boril, and after him Ivan Asen took the realm, being son of Asen the elder, and did affirm the Orthodox faith..³³ What led Euthymius to make this claim? Orthodox Christianity had been the official religion of Bulgarians since their conversion in 864, during the First Bulgarian Kingdom. Following the years of Byzantine conquest of the Bulgarian lands, the Second Bulgarian Kingdom was constituted in 1186. A little later, Kaloyan adopted Catholicism in exchange for recognition by Innocent III of his claim to the throne. This fact was probably not received well by the majority of the clergy or the lay public, who most likely continued to follow the Orthodox faith and rituals, following the 400 years old

³² Jennifer Lawler. *Encyclopedia of the Byzantine Empire*. McFarland Publishers, North Carolina, 2004, p. 64. Lawler says: 'He was himself captured and died while imprisoned.' ; Robert Lee Wolff. 'Baldwin of Flanders and Hainaut, First Latin Emperor of Constantinople: His Life, Death, and Resurrection, 1172-1225'. *Speculum* Vol. 27, No. 3 (Jul., 1952), The University of Chicago Press, p.281. Wolff says: 'In April 1205 he was captured by Ioanitsa, King of Vlachs and Bulgars, and sometime thereafter he almost certainly died in captivity'.

³³ Patriarch Euthymius. 'Panegyric of Ioan Polyvotski'. Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.87. Original text: [По тмк ооуво царствова Ёириль и по нѣакар-кѣть царство баниъ Йсьнь, съиънь старого ХианнаЙскна царк, ИЖа и вкра; православнаѣ до конца ооутверди.].

tradition. In his narrative, Patriarch Euthymius discretely evades the intricacies of this alliance with the Papacy, perhaps out of respect for Kaloyan. Neither this relationship nor Kaloyan's marriage to the Cuman Tzelguba (most probably a pagan woman) could have been deeds that would have merited praise from the patriarch. Yet Euthymius never ridiculed the king, mentioning only in passing that Ivan Asen 'completely reaffirmed the Orthodox Faith'. This statement probably refers to the alliance forged between Emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes of Nicaea and Ivan Asen II against the Latin Empire.³⁴ It was this sort of union that Ivan Asen had been aspiring toward in the hope that it would bring him new territorial gains. The two rulers signed an agreement at Gallipoli in 1235 that was sealed with the marriage of Ivan Asen's daughter Helen to the son of Vatatzes, Theodore II Lascaris.³⁵ It provided for full recognition of the independence of the Bulgarian Church, whose supreme leader, Joachim, archbishop of Tarnovgrad, was granted the title of patriarch. Thus, the Bulgarian Patriarchate, once destroyed by Basil II, was restored, which also implied the complete and final renunciation of the 1204 union with the pope. It was to this event that Euthymius referred when discussing Ivan Asen's reversion to Orthodoxy.

The importance and value of the writings of Euthymius cannot be understated. He was an author both highly educated and subtly diplomatic with unlimited access to the entire body of literature kept in the fourteenth century at the Bulgarian capital. His are credible written sources that contribute to dispelling some doubts and clarifying important details regarding the history of the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire.

The rise and the fall of the Latin Empire

How did later Orthodox authors describe the conquest of Constantinople by the knights of the Fourth Crusade and how did they portray the participants in it? An interesting description can be found in the text, *Life and Small Praise for St. John of Rila*, written by Dimitar Kantakuzin, an eminent Bulgarian man of letters who lived in the fifteenth century:³⁶

³⁴ Guy Perry. *John of Brienne: King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c.1175-1237*. Cambridge University Press, 2013, p.174. Perry says: 'The alliance was fittingly sealed by the betrothal marriage of Vatatzes' heir and de jure co-emperor Theodore II Laskaris to Asen's daughter, who had previously promised to Baldwin'.

³⁵ George Akropolites. *The History*. Ruth Macrides (trans), Oxford University Press, 2007, p.33-34.

³⁶ Dimitar Cantacousin. 'Life and small praise for St. Ivan Rilski', Georgi Danchev, Nevyana Doncheva (eds.) *Tarnovo book schools, Antology*, University of Sofia Publishing House St.Kliment Ohridski, Sofia, 1996. [Димитър Кантакузин, Житие с малка похвала на Иван Рилски, Георги Данчев, Невяна Дончева (ред), *Търновска книжовна школа. Антология*, Университетско издателство "Св.Климент Охридски", София, 1996.]

And as if from nowhere there came the third and main threat that was to be ultimate, for the Venetians and the others from the west and from Italy, all of the latin teaching, namely those who had wickedly divided the Church for the sake of impure additions to the faith and who were evil warriors against Orthodoxy and blameworthy for the common loss. They rose against Orthodoxy and damaged it greatly and did take in enmity the royal city and took to dwelling within it and did destroy, alas! the unearthly beauty of its churches while they dwelt within it for sixty and more years. And when they become masters of the city anew, continued to wage war with the Bulgars. And while they were thus occupied the Ismaelites chose a good time to take all of Anatolia unto the sea to put it under their authority.³⁷

The text represents a sharp criticism of the knights of the Fourth Crusade. Pride of place in the narrative is assigned to the Venetians, who were well-known in the East through their commercial activities. They, together with everyone else from the West, are accused of being schismatic and adulterating the true faith. By calling them ‘evil warriors against Orthodoxy’, the author leaves no doubt as to his personal attitude toward the Catholic army. He reflects with deep sadness upon the destruction of the ‘unearthly beauty of its churches’, by which he probably means all the churches’ valuables, relics, and holy remains that were carted off to the West by the crusaders. Despite the passing of two and a half centuries, the wounds inflicted by the Fourth Crusade were still fresh and this text provides ample proof of this. In the context of the subsequent successful campaigns of the Ottoman Turks, referred to in the text as ‘Ismaelites’, the crusaders are represented as culprits of universal ruin, ‘blameworthy for the common loss’. This new element in hagiographic literature was an attempt by the author to pass judgment on these historical events from the distance of time. A man who lived and worked within the Ottoman Empire, Kantakuzin sought to identify the causes for their presence on the Balkan Peninsula.

It is a fact that after the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders, the territories of the former Byzantine Empire were destabilised and the empire never quite regained its lustre, even after the Latin rulers were driven out in 1261. The challenges facing the Latin Empire in its brief existence are well known: wars on all possible fronts, short-lived alliances with its neighbours, insufficient support from the West, and a lack of strong and capable emperors.³⁸

³⁷ Dimitar Cantacousin. ‘Life and small praise for St. Ivan Rilski’, Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p. 97.

³⁸ Thomas Madden. ‘The Latin Empire of Constantinople’s Fractured Foundation: The Rift between Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders.’ *Papers from the Sixth Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, Istanbul, Turkey, 25-29 August 2004*. Ashgate, St. Louis University, p.45-52; See also: B. Hendrickx, ‘The Main Problems of the History of the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204-1261)’. *Revue belge de Philologie et d’Histoire*, Anée, 1974, tome 52-4, pp. 787-799. Retrieved from: https://www.persee.fr/doc/rbph_0035-0818_1974_num_52_4_3022. (Accessed 17.04.2018).

The combination of all this ultimately brought about its demise and the restoration of the Byzantine Empire under Michael VIII Palaiologos. Information about this reconquest can be found in the Tarnovgrad inscription, which dates to the reign of Ivan Asen II and is carved on a stone pillar in the Church of the Forty Martyrs. Today, this epigraphic monument remains at the exact place where it was created. It was written following the glorious victory of Ivan Asen over the Epiroean despot Theodore Komnenos. The text was fully quoted in the previous chapter and gives us important information on the diplomatic situation in Eastern Europe around 1230. The Latin ruler at this time, Baldwin II or Baldwin of Courtenay, was underage and his regent, John of Brienne, titular king of Jerusalem, was appointed emperor-regent for life. The situation in the Latin Empire was complicated: Constantinople and the surrounding area were all that remained of its erstwhile territories. The emperor and his regent were trying desperately to secure financial and military aid from the West in order to ensure the survival of the empire. From the text on the pillar, we learn that the Latin rulers endured by the grace of Ivan Asen II and that they had bowed to his sceptre. That fact, as well as the fact that the Latin Emperor was forced to pay taxes to the Bulgarian king, can be found in *The Prologue Life of Saint Petka*. According to scholars, the *Prologue Life* was written around the year 1235.³⁹ The earliest edition that exists dates from the fourteenth century and reads as follows:

For then the Franks ruled Tsarigrad (Constantinople) and did proffer tribute to Ivan Asen. Yet he desired not silver, not precious stones, but rose in earnest and translated the sacred body (of St. Petka) to his glorious Tsar's city of Tarnovo.⁴⁰

The payment of tribute is explicitly mentioned in conjunction with the transfer of some of the most valuable relics of saints held in Constantinople. During his long reign, Ivan Asen II occasionally allied himself with the Latins, but he also laid siege to Constantinople in an alliance with John III Doukas Vatatzes in 1235. It is possible that the holy relics in question were a gift for the Bulgarian king during the time when he was on good neighbourly terms with Latin Constantinople. It is just as possible, however, that they were provided as reparations and tribute to the significantly stronger northern neighbour by the crusaders and their descendants. As we have seen in the seventeenth century Wallachian *Chronograph* by Mikhail Moxa, the

³⁹ Иван Божилов, Стефан Кожухаров. *Българската литература и книжнина през XIII век*. Издателство Български писател, София, 1987, стр.53-54; [Ivan Bojilov, Stefan Kojuharov. *The Bulgarian literature and books during 13th century*. Bulgarian writer publishing house, Sofia, 1987, p.53-54].

⁴⁰ Anonymous. 'The prologue Life of Saint Petka'. Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013, pp.89-90.

payment of tribute to the Bulgarians and the handing over of the holy relics of Saint Petka to Ivan Asen were well-remembered events within the Orthodox community.

Compared to these detailed descriptions of the devastation caused by the Fourth Crusade in the capture of Constantinople and the looting of Orthodox churches, the demise of the Latin Empire is rather succinct in Slavonic literature. Moxa in the *Chronograph* writes:

Michael Paleologus did take the city(Constantinople) from the Franks in year 6769(1261) and did reign 24 years.⁴¹

The Greek-language *Short Byzantine Chronicles* are laconic about this fact, as its name implies. Chronicle 33/1, 2 states:

In year 6712 (1204), did the Franks take Constantinople; in the year 6769(1261) did the Lord Andronicus Palaeologus take that city from the Franks.⁴²

The Russian chronographic text, the *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*, dated sometime around 1292, lists the names of Byzantine emperors with brief annotations, such as this one for 1261:

Michael the First Palaeologus. This man was Latin for 24 years; he chased the Latins from Constantinople.⁴³

In this last quotation, it is not clear why Michael VIII is identified as ‘Latin’. Is this an accusation? The aim of this written source is to provide information in very short notes and there are no further explanations. Presumably, if Michael chased the Catholic Latins from Constantinople, he could not be Latin or Catholic himself. Most likely, the author of the chronicle meant that Michael lived for twenty-four years outside Constantinople while the city was ruled by the Latins.

The fall of Constantinople, as might be expected, caused negative reactions and is described in a multitude of texts of diverse types and content. The same cannot be said of the reconquest of the city in 1261. Bearing in mind that some of the texts considered here were

⁴¹ Mikhail Moxa. ‘Chronograph’. Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.154. Original text: [Михаил Палеолог отнеа Цариград от Франките през годината 6769 (аѡѡа) после цароуваа 24 лет].

⁴² P. Schreiner. ‘Die Byzantinischen Kleinchroniken’. Bd.II: *Historischer Kommentar*, CFHB XII, Wien, 1977, p. 238. English text in: Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013, page 112.

⁴³ *Летописец Елинский и Римский*. О.В.Творгов (ред. сост.).Том. 1. СПб.: Дмитрий Буланин, Санкт Петербург, 2001; [*The Hellenic and Roman Chronicle*, O.V. Tvorgov (ed.), Tome 1, Dmitriy Bulanin, Sankt Petersburg, 2001]. English text in: Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.133.

written after 1453, when Constantinople was conquered by the Ottoman Turks, the recapture of Constantinople may have been considered of lesser significance in the history of the defunct Byzantine Empire. Furthermore, in the final days of the Latin Empire, Constantinople may have lost some of the importance that it had once held. Michael VIII Palaiologos ruled a powerful Greek state with Nicaea as its capital and Constantinople was perhaps viewed as just a city on its periphery. Of course, the ancient capital retained important symbolic, religious, and strategic value. This was the reason that its recapture is noted in the sources, albeit without excessive fanfare.

The rift has two sides

Was the status quo in Eastern Europe restored with the restoration of the Byzantine Empire in 1261? Or was it that, after years of co-existence, coalitions, and dynastic marriages between Orthodox and Catholic Christians, the various empires and kingdoms managed to elevate Christian virtue as the driving force in their relationships? Certain small crusader states in the territory of the former Byzantine Empire survived well into the fifteenth century, notably the Principality of Morea (1205-1432), founded by William of Champlitte and Geoffrey of Villehardouin, and the Duchy of Athens (1205-1458), founded by Otto de la Roche.⁴⁴ Both small statelets were conquered by the Ottomans yet somehow managed to survive for quite a long time as Catholic islands in an Orthodox sea.

How relations between the Latins and Orthodox Christians developed in the intervening period – and whether something had changed in the meantime – can be ascertained from an Orthodox-Slavonic text titled *Life of the Martyrs of Zograph [Monastery]: The Latin Attack on Zograph*, dated to 1275, fourteen years after the Catholics were ultimately driven out of Constantinople. The reason this text came into existence was the refusal of the monks of Zograph Monastery to recognize the 1274 union between the Eastern and Western Church, which provoked an attack on the monastery:

When there reigned over the Greeks the impure and vainglorious Tsar Mateolog, who was one mind with Latins and did praise them, the Latins rose from Italy and Rome to come to Constantinople to their said fellow conniver Palaeologus. And on their way they waged war against others, as was said, and did at length come to the monastery of the sacred and glorious

⁴⁴ Peter Topping. 'The Morea, 1311–1460'. Hazard, Harry W(ed.). *A History of the Crusades, Volume III: The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1975, p. 104–166; See also: Kenneth Meyer Setton. *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571: The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries*. Volume 1, The American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1976, p.431-439.

great martyr and warrior the good George, called also Zograph. And because the Latins were not permitted within the monastery by the brothers, they did enter by force and seized it and set fire to the tower of the Tsar Asen on the tenth day of October in 6784 (1275). The tower and the church did burn to the ground with 193 books and church vessels and golden stoles, and most magnificent curtains and all other church vessels that were left by pious tsars of eternal memory and namely by St. Peter and the great Ivan Asen and by Simeon. Some of the objects were taken by impure ones, others fell into flames, and alongside them did burn one and twenty coenobites and four laymen. Thus did our enemy [the devil] bring against the Zograph fathers the shameless and cruel nation of the Franks, who conducted much outrage towards them.... As the martyrs died for the faith of the Christ, so did the Zograph monks die for their God-blessed life and faith and did not join the Latins who use unleavened sacrament.⁴⁵

The text is full of contempt for the Latins and Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII, whose crime was that he had concluded the union. It is quite obvious that the contribution that same emperor made toward the recapture of Constantinople just fourteen years earlier did not quite cut it with the monks of Zograph. For such secular affairs could not in any way justify the spiritual betrayal of Michael, who was dubbed a Latin postulant and ‘impure and vainglorious’. The profoundly pious Orthodox monks could hardly have selected any more harsh and contemptuous words to express their disdain and resentment for the union with Catholicism. After all, it was Michael VIII Palaiologos who sent the Catalan mercenaries to Zograph Monastery.⁴⁶ The knights-mercenaries were not spared either, being labelled ‘shameless and cruel’, well-justified words considering their exploits chronicled in the text. The mercenaries burned twenty-one monks and four laymen at the stake, set fire to the monastery, and many of the relics were either burned in the conflagration or carted away as loot by the invaders. It is interesting that the text refers to the great Bulgarian kings Ivan Asen and Simeon, who are described as ‘pious’. Written in Orthodox-Slavonic, the text was authored by a monk or several monks of Slavic origin and, although the monastery was formally within the Byzantine Empire, it is quite clear that the monks had more respect for the Bulgarian kings, who were recognised donors to the monasteries in Mount Athos, than for their emperors. The analogy made between the earliest Christian martyrs who died for Christ’s faith and the tragic demise of the monks,

⁴⁵ Anonymous. ‘Life of the Martyrs of Zographou. The Latin Attack on Zographou’. English text in: Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.94.

⁴⁶ Kiril Petkov. *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century: The Records of a Bygone Culture*. Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2008, p.444. See also this web page created by Bulgarian Academy of Science containing ample information about the history of Zograph Monastery and useful bibliography: <http://slovo-aso.cl.bas.bg/zograph.html>. (Accessed 09.05.2018).

burned at the stake by the 'Franks', is convincing proof that the deeply religious monks would never have allowed Orthodoxy to be united with Catholicism. More than seventy years after the Latins had settled in these lands, the schism seemed deeper than ever.

Some Russian texts are indicative of the fact that the Latin Emperors were also never fully accepted by the more northern peoples who professed the Orthodox faith. The thirteenth century *Hellenic and Roman Chronicle* has additional notes beside the name of each emperor of Constantinople indicating his religious affiliation. A complete list Byzantine rulers was appended to the original text, entitled *Short history with a list of Byzantine monarchs*, indicating whether they were Orthodox or heretic.⁴⁷ The text does not distinguish between Byzantine and Latin emperors – all of them are simply referred to as 'Kings at Constantinople'. In the long list, however, opposite the name of each of the Latin Emperors, appears the word 'heretic'. This, in itself, is quite telling; nowhere is the words 'Latin' or 'Roman' used, which prompts the conclusion that for Orthodox Christians of the Middle Ages, anyone who belonged to a different version of Christianity was considered a heretic. This was the viewpoint manifested by Catholics whenever they had the willingness and opportunity to move against heretics, such as the Albigensian Crusade and the subsequent campaigns that resulted in the almost complete annihilation of the Cathars.

It should be noted that persecutions of Bogomils, the Balkan equivalent to the Cathars and their prototype, had been commonplace in both Bulgaria and Byzantium.⁴⁸ Moreover, Orthodox-Slavonic sources provide data about persecutions of heretics, who were categorised as either 'non-baptised' or 'Latin', by order of an Orthodox ruler. This happened during the reign of the Serbian king, Stefan the First-Crowned, who was assisted by his brother, Rastko Nemanjić (subsequently canonised as Saint Sava, the most revered saint in Serbia to this day). The text is from the sixteenth century and reads as follows:

And he (St. Sava) betrothed his brother Stefan with a royal wreath and made him kralj (king). And he brought with him icon painters and stone masons from Constantinople, and built a greater cathedral church, and had it painted and decorated with marble, and (built) yet many other churches. Those who turned to heresy without baptism he caused to take baptism and where they fell baptized to Latin heresy, he prayed for them and anointed them with oil, and read them the catechism. Where they failed to submit and remained as if in a dream, he

⁴⁷ 'The Hellenic and Roman Chronicle'. Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013, pp.131-133.

⁴⁸ R. J. Crampton. *Concise History of Bulgaria*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p. 18-21; See also: R. van den Broek. 'The Cathars: Medieval Gnostics'. R. van den Broek and W. J. Hanegraaff (eds). *Gnosis and Hermeticism. From Antiquity to Modern Times*. State University New York Press, 1998, pp. 87-108.

instructed his brother Stefan to expel them from his father's lands and not to pass their scab to others. And he would not allow thorns to grow alongside vines.⁴⁹

The amount of useful information that we can glean from that short excerpt is exceptional. Stefan the First-Crowned (1196-1228) ruled Serbia at the exact time of the fall of Constantinople and the establishment of the Latin Empire. Clashes with the crusaders in this period were on the rise, causing a reaction on the part of the Serbs. The heretics mentioned in the text are divided in two categories, 'without baptism' and 'Latin heresy', and the action undertaken against them by the Serbian kingdom and Church are described in great detail. The 'non-baptised' came from nomadic tribes such as Cumans, Uzes, and Pechenegs, all of whom were active in this part of Europe at the time. This attitude is in contrast to the policy adopted by the Bulgarian king Kaloyan. What striking difference in the attitude towards them between the Serbs and the Bulgarian king Kaloyan, who not only married a Cuman woman but had the Cuman army as his most loyal ally in war. This reveals key differences within the Orthodox camp and the flexible diplomatic abilities of the Bulgarian king. Apparently, in contemporary Serbia, anyone who refused to 'voluntarily' convert to Orthodoxy faced expulsion from the kingdom. The Latin heresy was described as a 'scab' – a strong expression of disgust in the local vocabulary. It seems that, between the years 1196 and 1204, Rastko made numerous trips to Constantinople, where he enjoyed the support of the Byzantine emperors in the building and interior painting of churches. After the fall of Constantinople to the Latins, the hatred of the Serbian kingdom and Church was directed at the crusaders. Without exaggeration, this text provides information about the persecution of Catholics as official government policy by the Orthodox Church and Serbian state. Albeit at a smaller scale than the persecutions organised by the pope, these were the exact same processes at the exact same time. The 'thorns of the vineyard' is a clear allegory of the cleansing of the state of any form of religion other than Orthodoxy. Thus, by calling each other 'eretics and schismatics, both Catholic and Orthodox

⁴⁹ 'For Sava of Serbia'. Excerpt from *SerbianChronograph*. Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013, p.224-245(230-231). Original text: [И брата своего Стефана вънча царскими вънцѣмъ, и постави его краљомъ, и съ собой икиниписци и мраморникы изъ Цариграда, приведе, и великою црковѣ съборною създа и подписа въ и мраморомъ оукрасивъ, и иныи многыи цркви. Соуштинихъ же въ ереси елици обраштахоу се некръштениихъ повелѣвааше крѣтити; а елици крѣштении въ латинскоую ересь выпадоше, снихъ молитвоу мироу изгълаголавъ помазоуеъ ихъ е върннимъ причитаеъ. Елици же не покарахоу се аште и въ сѣноу соуште, снихъ повелѣваше братоу краљу Стефану съ безчѣстиемъ изъ отчѣства изгнати, да не и прочимъ, рече, свое красты подадоути. И не даваше растѣти трѣнню въкопомъ съ виноградаомъ].

Christians created two of the most negative concepts that circulated in the Middle Ages. Nobody could be worse than these!

Conclusion

As we look into the intricacies of the rich written heritage of the Orthodox peoples from the twelfth through sixteenth centuries, we discover the history of Constantinople and Byzantium, told and re-told from a different perspectives, one that is absent in Western scholarship dedicated to the crusades and specifically the Fourth Crusade. The events surrounding this crusade have thus far only been analysed on the basis of Greek and Latin written sources. The voice of the Orthodox peoples who worshiped Constantinople as their very own Jerusalem has, until now, remained largely ignored by Western historiography. But the reconstruction of historical truth cannot be complete without consideration of those alternative sources. The information they carry is a valuable contribution to the body of scientific knowledge. From the descriptions of the riches of Constantinople immediately before its fall to the devastation and plunder of the Orthodox Church afterwards to the short reign of the little-known emperor Nicholas to the fate of the first Latin Emperor, Baldwin I, to accounts of peaceful co-existence between Catholic and Orthodox Christians in Constantinople, the Serbian policy of forced conversion to Orthodoxy or banishment for non-believers and Catholics. These are only a few of the facts that rewrite history and need to be considered in future scholarship. The general attitude to the crusaders on the part of literate Bulgarians, Serbs, and Russians provides another important detail regarding the Fourth Crusade. Unfamiliarity with these sources has always been one of the reasons why they are absent from Western historiography, the other no less important reason being that modern historians do not seem interested in including them in their research. Even though most of these Orthodox-Slavonic sources are available in English thanks to Rakova, neglecting these sources has reached new heights with Thomas Madden and a review he wrote in 2015, in which he states: ‘As it happens, however, the Slavic sources beyond the *Chronicle of Novgorod* have so little to say about the Fourth Crusade and the period of the Latin occupation that detailed knowledge of the event is hardly necessary’.⁵⁰ It is hard to believe that Madden’s blunt rejection is based on his own deep knowledge of these Orthodox-Slavonic sources. Unfortunately, Daniel Woolf’s words cited at

⁵⁰ Thomas Madden. ‘Book review of Snezhana Rakova, *The Fourth Crusade in the Historical Memory of the Eastern Orthodox Slavs*, trans. Peter Skip, Sofia, Tendri Publishing House, 2013’. *Crusades, Volume 14*, Edited by Nikolaos G. Chrissis, Benjamin Z Kedar, Jonathan Phillips, Ashgate, Dorchester, 2015, p.247.

the beginning of this chapter about the ‘global dominance of Western academic historical practices’ written in twentieth century applies still to the twenty-first century. When prominent scholars like Madden flippantly ignore and neglect Orthodox-Slavonic sources regarding the Fourth Crusade, this raises a flag that progress is on hold. In reality, the reconstruction of historical truth is possible using solely Orthodox-Slavonic sources. Knowing these sources and analysing them from different angles yields important details and previously-unknown facts. Meanwhile, by putting them together with the wealth of the Old French, Latin and Greek sources, we can safely claim that the unknowns about the Fourth Crusade have become significantly fewer.

Chapter IV

Politics of the Cross Versus Politics of the Sword: Bulgaria Between the Catholicism and Orthodoxy

Introduction

In the early thirteen century, Eastern Europe and Asia Minor were the scenes of gigantic upheavals, triggering events that set precedents in world history and changed the face of Europe forever. They involved the disintegration of empires and the creation of new ones, and the assimilation, division, and unification of states in often unstable, short-lived, and volatile alliances. All of this took place within a feverishly brief historical period of around sixty years. There was quiet diplomacy and there were thunderous wars. There were thousands of spearheads and countless treaties impaled on spearheads. There were conversions from one church to another in pursuit of less-than-religious goals. In fact, there has never been a similar situation in history when so many young and emerging states fought so ambitiously to assert themselves on the political scene. These states include, among others, the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, which had come into being in 1186; the Latin Empire, founded in 1204; and the Greek Empire of Nicaea, Despotate of Epirus, and Empire of Trebizond, all also established in 1204. As in chemistry, these processes had their catalysts and accelerators – their motivational forces. Large empires like that of Byzantium have collapsed in the past ruined by the death of their leader (e.g. the empire of Alexander the Great) or systematically weakened by barbarians (e.g. the Roman Empire). However, they have never been immediately replaced by ambitious new state formations with functional military and administrative structures, including kings with traceable noble descent. In the late twelfth and early thirteenth century in the Balkans and parts of Asia Minor we are witness to a unique situation: five new states founded within eight years! Excluding the rise of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, the other four were founded as a result of the Fourth Crusade. While the ambitions of the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade have been well studied and thoroughly discussed in Western historiography by scholars like Thomas Madden, Jonathan Riley-Smith, Christopher Tyerman, and Hans Meyer, there remains confusion regarding the motives and goals of the other countries involved, especially Bulgaria. There had hardly been a similar situation in world history, especially in the existence of so many young and emerging states that had ambitiously and at any cost been trying to assert themselves on the political scene.

Religion as a means for self-assertion

Relations between Byzantium and Bulgaria were complex and multi-layered long before the arrival of the crusaders. Bulgaria had adopted Orthodox Christianity as its official religion under the terms of a peace treaty with Byzantium in 863, which governed the status of Bulgaria in a way that was not particularly favourable to it. Thus, Bulgaria emerged as the second country in the world to officially adopt Orthodoxy, a century before Russia, which embraced it in 988. Such spiritual proximity, however, failed to produce any similar feelings on the battlefield. Bulgaria and Byzantium waged bloody wars against each other for almost the entire period of their coexistence, with varying levels of success. The First Bulgarian Kingdom was almost completely obliterated under Byzantine emperor Basil II, known as the 'Bulgar Slayer' (976-1025). Basil pursued a fierce military campaign that lasted for some forty years with the intention to wipe Bulgaria off the map. Ultimately, he succeeded and between 1018 and 1185, Bulgaria lost its independence, becoming part of the Byzantine military-administrative system.

The restored Second Bulgarian Kingdom continued much the same policy *vis-à-vis* Byzantium while at the same time seeking international recognition for its king and patriarch. This proved to be a long and arduous process in which the diplomatic genius of king Kaloyan played a pivotal role. Kaloyan was the younger brother of Ivan Asen I and Petar II, the first kings of the second kingdom. Barely eighteen years old, he was surrendered as a hostage to Constantinople and spent two years in Byzantine captivity before he managed to escape.¹ No details are known of his life there. It is undisputed, though, that afterwards he became a bitter enemy of Byzantium. Kaloyan ascended the throne in 1197, after both of his brothers fell victim to murderous conspiracies.² In continuing their cause, Kaloyan set about procuring *de jure* international recognition for the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. Relations with Byzantium were strained to the utmost, since the empire saw the territories of Bulgaria as part of its own realm, torn away as a result of mutiny. Sensing an opportunity to expand the sphere of influence of the Catholic Church, the great strategist, Pope Innocent III, sent Kaloyan a letter carefully probing the possibility for Bulgaria to join the community of Catholic nations. To Kaloyan, this was a favourable opportunity and he engaged in a long epistolary exchange with the pope.

¹Alexandru Madgearu. *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire, 1185–1280*. Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2017, p.111.

²Ibid., p.113- 114.

Correspondence between Kaloyan and the Holy See started in late 1199 and continued until the end of 1204.³

The end of the twelfth century was a turbulent time, bringing about dramatic changes in the geopolitics of Eastern Europe. All the while, contact with Byzantium was not completely severed. Although fierce foes on the battlefield, Bulgaria and Byzantium had spent centuries together as fellow Orthodox states, a status quo that the Patriarch of Constantinople wished to maintain. Through skilful manoeuvring between the Papacy and Constantinople, Kaloyan was able to obtain what he wanted. In a letter to Innocent, the Bulgarian king informs the pope that John X, patriarch of Constantinople, told him ‘Come to us, and we shall crown you and appoint you a patriarch, because without a patriarch, it will not do’.⁴ This was all that the king and his young kingdom needed, but could the Papacy offer more? Besides, because he was carefully monitoring foreign politics, Kaloyan was in no hurry to give his reply to the patriarch. Guided by a desire to wrestle as much benefit as possible from signing the proposed treaty, Kaloyan escalated his demands to both parties while biding his time to acquire the best offer for himself and the Bulgarian Church and state. The growing threat of the Fourth Crusade and the territorial claims of the Catholic King Emeric of Hungary (1196–November 1204) would have made a compact with the Patriarchate of Constantinople detrimental and dangerous to Bulgaria. Therefore, after around five years of negotiations and the exchange of twenty-seven letters, Kaloyan submitted to Papal authority.

On 25 February 1204, Innocent III issued a bull proclaiming Kaloyan king of the Bulgarians and Vlachs, adding: ‘We are sending to you, through our beloved son Leo, your royal sceptre (*sceptrum regni*) and royal crown (*reginum diadema*).’⁵ On 15 October 1204,

³ James Ross Sweeney. ‘Innocent III, Hungary and the Bulgarian Coronation: A Study in Medieval Papal Diplomacy’. *Church History*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973, vol. 42 (No.3) p.320–334.

⁴ King Kaloyan. ‘Letter to Innocent III from June 1203’. *FLHB*, Corpus III, p. 319. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/3/gal/3_319.html. (Accessed 18.04.2018). Original text: [‘Veni ad nos, coronabimus te in imperatorem et faciemus tibi patriarcham, quia imperium sine patriarcha non staret’]. My English translation.

⁵ Pope Innocent III. ‘Coronation letter to King Kaloyan from 25 February 1204’. *FLHB*, Corpus III, Sofia, 1965, p.326 Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/3/gal/3_326.html. (Accessed 18.04.2018). Original text: [‘Caloiohanni illustri Bulgarorum et Blachorum regi’]. The original Latin date of the letter is: VI kalendas martii. Indictione VII. Incarnationis Dominice anno M.CC.III. Pontificatus vero domini Innocentii pape III, anno septimo. [Six days (to) March, indict 7. On the Sacrament of the Lord’s Incarnation year 1203. Seventh year from the papacy of Innocent III.] N.B. The year 1203 is according to the calendar used by the Catholic Church with start of the year positioned in March and the end of the year positioned at the end of February. After the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in October 1582 the beginning of the calendar year was officially moved to 1 January. The pre-Gregorian date of the letter is 1203 but according to the modern calendar the letter is written in 1204. Additional clarification is the fact that the seventh year of the Innocent III rule (when the letter was written) started on 8 January 1204 (He was elected on 08 January 1198; See: Michael Ott.

Cardinal Leo arrived in Tarnovgrad and on 7 November 1204, he anointed Archbishop Vassily primate of the Bulgarian Church. The following day, 8 November, on behalf of the pope, Vassily proclaimed Kaloyan king (*rex Bulgarorum et Blachorum*) and bestowed upon him the royal crown and sceptre. Early in 1204 Kaloyan sent a letter to the pope announcing his crowning as king and the anointment of his highest priest supreme head and Patriarch of the Bulgarian Church.⁶ In effect, Kaloyan concluded an union that recognised the supremacy of the Catholic Church. Thus, both sides were happy and the papal blessing and coronation ascribed great authority to the Bulgarian ruler across Europe. That was Kaloyan's foreign policy triumph. Bulgaria stayed in the Catholic camp until 1235 when at a council convened in Lampsak, Asia Minor Bulgaria was officially declared an Orthodox country again (a topic discussed in greater detail later in this chapter). It is worth mentioning at this point that in 1217 Serbia was granted papal recognition by Pope Honorius III. The Serbian king, Stephen, known as the First-Crowned, was crowned by papal legate in Serbia with a crown provided by the Pope.⁷ However, Stephens's brother St Sava was head of the Serbian church at the time and he did not recognise papal authority.⁸ After two years spent in exile in Nicaea St Sava returned to Serbia in 1219 as a 'Archibishop of all Serbian lands', a title given to him by Theodore I Laskaris, the emperor of the Nicaean Empire, and its Patriarch, Manuel I Sarantenos.⁹ The relations between the two brothers had clearly improved significantly. There is even discussion amongst scholars concerning a second coronation performed by St Sava between 1219-1221.¹⁰ Immediately after his return St Sava reorganised the Serbian Church according to the Orthodox canon.¹¹ The alliance between Serbia and Rome was short lived, just a few years in contrast with the Bulgarian-Rome church union, which lasted for thirty one years. Similar developments can be observed in Armenia, although there Catholicism never officially became the state

Pope Innocent III. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. Accessed: 21 Mar. 2019 <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08013a.htm>.

⁶ The year is 1204 but the exact date is not specified. The end of the later states: Year six thousand seven hundred and twelve. Indict seven. The original text in Latin: 'Anno sexmillesimo septingentesimo duodecimo. Indictine septioma. As with the letter discussed in note 5, the year of the indiction appears to be wrong (indiction seven is 1208).⁷ Allain Ducellier. *Albania, Serbia and Bulgaria*. David Abulafia (ed). *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 5, C.1198-c.1300*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p.779-796.

⁷ Allain Ducellier. *Albania, Serbia and Bulgaria*. David Abulafia (ed). *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 5, C.1198-c.1300*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p.779-796.

⁸ Ibid, p.784

⁹ Timothy E. Gregory. *A History of Byzantium*. Wiley&Blackwell, Singapore, 2010, p.344

¹⁰ John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. 1994, p. 108

¹¹ Graham Speake. *A History of the Athonite Commonwealth: The Spiritual and Cultural Diaspora of Mounth Atos*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2018, pp. 87-88.

religion. Founded after a rebellion in 1080 by separating land from the Byzantine Empire, Armenia quickly became a factor in Asia Minor, seeking recognition.¹² There was good interaction between the crusaders (especially during the First Crusade), the Crusader states and Armenia. For his help, Constantine I Prince of Armenia received the title “Baron” after the successful siege of Antioch in 1097.¹³ There are records for correspondence between Pope Clement III and Levon II with a crown promised to the Armenian prince in exchange for military and logistical help.¹⁴ In 1199 Prince Levon II was crowned in the cathedral of Tarsus receiving a banner with the insignia of a lion from Archbishop Conrad of Mainz in the name of Henry VI, Holy Roman Emperor and Armenia was recognised as a kingdom.¹⁵ As we can see, the policy of the Holy See towards the newly founded states emerging from the crumbling Byzantine Empire is very similar to the situation in Bulgaria. Going back to the Balkans and the Fourth Crusade we witness unprecedented developments. In April 1204, Constantinople was captured by the Latins and Baldwin was recognised as emperor by the pope. The Bulgarian king Kaloyan, however, had managed to stay ahead of the game with the papal bull and his royal title, already conferred in February 1204, predating the crowning of Baldwin. In theory, the Second Bulgarian Kingdom and the Latin Empire were on the same team. The Hungarian King Emeric, who was a constant menace on the western borders of Bulgaria, died in November 1204, the month of Kaloyan’s coronation. From the standpoint of the pope, everything in the East fell neatly into place under his jurisdiction: Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Latin Empire were all in the fold of the Catholic Church. Were things really as they seemed? Was there anything to portend the dramatic events of the very next year? It is known that Kaloyan sent a letter to the leaders of the Fourth Crusade, offering military support and a 100,000 strong army against Byzantium before the fall of Constantinople:

...and when they were hardily preparing their ships and their engines for the assault [on Constantinople] – that John the Vlach sent word to the high barons that if they would come crown him king so that he would be lord of his land of Vlachia, he would hold his land and

¹² Simon Payaslian. *The History of Armenia: From the Origins to the Present*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, New York, p.81.

¹³ Vahan Kurkdjian. The Barony of Cilician Armenia. *History of Armenia*.: Armenian General Benevolent Union of America, New York, 1958, pp. 213–226.

¹⁴ Zara Pogossian. The Letter of Love and Concord: A Revised Diplomatic Edition with Historical and Textual Comments and English Translation. Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2010, p.14-15.

¹⁵ Mary Nickerson Hardwicke. The Crusader States, 1192–1243. Kenneth M. Setton, Robert Lee Wolff, Harry W. Hazard (eds), *A History of the Crusades, Volume II: The Later Crusades, 1189-1311*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1969, pp.522-556

kingdom for them and would come to their aid to help them take Constantinople with all of one hundred thousand men.¹⁶

Even if we assume that the numbers were exaggerated, the willingness of Kaloyan to provide assistance was genuine and he was in a position to do so. Whether this willingness was sincere, an aspect of his rapport with the pope and his own desire to move Bulgaria into the Catholic world, or whether he had some other goals, is harder to determine. It is a fact, though, that the offer of assistance was superciliously turned down, as reported by Rober de Clari:

When the barons heard what John the Vlach was asking them, they said they would consider it, and when they had taken counsel, they came to a bad decision, for they answered that they cared nothing for him nor for his help, but should know well that they would hurt him and do harm him if they could.¹⁷

The offer was made around the same time that Kaloyan received the papal bull recognising him as king and Bulgaria as a Catholic state. Clearly, the leaders of the Fourth Crusade were either not privy to these negotiations or had simply chosen to ignore them. Turning down his assistance can be interpreted as a wrong move on their part, on account of the international situation, and it set a precedent for future problems between Bulgaria and the Latins.

Kaloyan's hatred for the Byzantine Empire was well known and the fact that his kingdom lay within territories that Byzantium considered its own exacerbated the rift between them. None of this, however, mattered to Boniface of Montferrat, Enrico Dandolo, or Baldwin of Flanders. Turning down Kaloyan's proffered assistance was a mistake the consequences of which completely undermined the successes of the Fourth Crusade. But these consequences did not materialise until Kaloyan made yet another attempt. Swallowing the first snub, after the fall of Constantinople and the founding of the Latin Empire, Kaloyan once again sent envoys to establish peaceful relations between the two states. This delegation was almost

¹⁶ Robert of Clari. *The conquest of Constantinople*. Translated by Edgar Holmes Mcneal, Columbia University Press, New York, 1964, page 86. Original text from: Robert de Clari. *Conquête de Constantinople*. Texte établi par P. Lauer, Paris, Champion, 1924, p.63 '[...]et qu'il ratornoient durement leur nes et leur engiens pour assalir, que Jehans li Blakis manda as hausbarons de l'ost que se il le voloient coroner a roi aestre sires de se tere de Blakie, que il tenroit se tereet sen roiaume d'aus, et qu'il venroit en leur aiwepour aidier a prendre Coustantinoble a tout.c.m. hommes a armes.'].]

¹⁷ Robert of Clari, *The conquest of Constantinople*, Translated by Edgar Holmes Mcneal, Columbia University Press, New York, 1964, page 88; Original text from: Robert de Clari, *Conquête de Constantinople*, Texte établi par P. Lauer, Paris, Champion, 1924, p.65. [' Quant li baron de l'ost seurent chou que Jehans li Blakis leur mandoit, si disent qu'il s'enconselleroient; et quant il se furent consellié, si eurent malvais conseil, si respondirent que ne de lui ne des'aiwe n'avoient il cure, mais bien seust il que il legreveroient et que il mal li feroient s'il pooient, et il leur vendi puis molt kier. Che fu molt grand deuset molt grans damages.'].]

certainly dispatched after Bulgaria's adoption of Catholicism. But this was not enough to ensure equality with the leaders of the Fourth Crusade. Nicéas Choniates recounts how the crusaders demanded that Kaloyan:

...he [Kaloyan] must address them in his letters not as a king [would address] his equal friends, but as a slave his masters; they demanded that he would lay down arms and relinquish his throne, or else they would rise against him, would devastate and lay bare all of Moesia, which he ruled without proper authority, having driven away the Rhōmaîoi, its proper rulers, and would reduce him to his previous status of slave.¹⁸

The direct non-recognition of Kaloyan's royal title by the crusaders, considering that it had been bestowed upon him by none other than Innocent himself, was rather odd, prompting one to ponder the real power the pope had over this deviant campaign, as well as the knights' loyalty to their spiritual leader and inspiration. Kaloyan kept the pope apprised of the situation, writing: 'Also for the Latins, which entered Constantinople, I am writing you, your honor, write them to stay away from my kingdom and my kingdom will not cause any damage to them'.¹⁹ Kaloyan's mention of the crusaders in Constantinople shows that he held out some hope of progress in their relations and believed that Innocent could influence a more favourable outcome. The king expected Innocent III to remind Baldwin I, the Latin Emperor, that Bulgaria was Catholic. Without such expectation, having already received the royal title and recognition that he needed, Kaloyan would hardly have maintained his relationship with the Papacy just out of courtesy. It is clear, however, that his expectations were not justified. The attitude of the crusaders toward him and Bulgaria remained hostile, and these facts were more than sufficient for a declaration of war.

In analysing the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire that came into being as a result of it, Western historiography does not focus upon Constantinople's relations with Bulgaria apart from mentioning the fierce battles between them. Kaloyan's correspondence with the

¹⁸ Никита Хониат. 'История'. *Гръцки извори за българската история*, Съставили и редактирали: Михаил Войнов, Василка Тъпкова-Займова, Любомир Йончев, София, БАН, 1983, Том XI, с.7-94(73); Nicetas Choniates. 'Historia'. *FGHB*, Editors: Mihail Voinov, Vasilka Tapkova-Zaimova, Lubomir Yonchev. Sofia, Bulagarian Science Academy, Sofia, 1983, Volume XI. Old Greek-Bulgarian bi-lingua, pp.7-94(73); Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/11/gal/11_073.html . (Accessed 18.04.2018). My English translation.

¹⁹ King Kaloyan. 'Letter to Innocent III from November 1204'. *FLHB*. Corpus III, p.360. The original text in Latin: ['De Latinis quoque, qui Constantinopolim introierunt, scribo sanctitati vestre, ut eis scribas quatinus distent ad imperio meo et sic imperium meum nullum malum eis facit...']. Retrived from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/3/gal/3_360.html (Accessed 18.04.2018). My English translation.

pope and the crusaders, as well as his offer of assistance or his attempt to cross over into the Catholic camp, remains under studied. The present analysis of such little-known and discussed facts seeks to shed additional light on the actions and motives of all participating parties. It would not be far-fetched to say that, by snubbing Kaloyan and threatening Bulgaria, the crusaders sealed the fate of the Latin Empire. The dramatic military defeat at Adrianople in 1205 and the capture of Emperor Baldwin dealt a heavy blow to the brittle empire.

The diplomatic game of Kaloyan

During the first half of the thirteenth century, Bulgaria experienced enormous growth and achieved major successes on the battlefield owing to two very powerful kings: Kaloyan and Ivan Asen II. The countless confrontations and battles between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire mostly drained the strength of the crusaders, because the Bulgarians had fresh support from the Cumans and other nomadic tribes coming from the steppe to the north. The Bulgarian kings had the skill to channel deftly this destructive force to their own benefit. Thus, they always felt safe along their northern border, allowing them to direct their efforts south toward Byzantium and the Latin Empire.

Though strong and ambitious on the battlefield, the crusaders failed on the diplomatic front because they were unable to foresee the benefits of an alliance with Bulgaria. Peace along their northern border would have allowed them to obliterate the three weak Greek statelets founded by the remnants of the Byzantine Empire. This, in turn, would have enabled them to forestall any attempts to restore Byzantium, thereby ensuring a future for their empire. Instead, barely a year after the capture of Constantinople, the crusaders rushed into bloody battles with a country that had just adopted Catholicism and whose ruler had offered them military assistance. This was not a particularly far-sighted move on the part of Baldwin, who lost his life and jeopardised the very future of the Latin Empire because of his poor decisions. For their part, the Bulgarians now had a perfect *casus belli* and military goal. Having waged wars on Byzantium for centuries, with variable success but never given an opportunity to conquer Constantinople, Bulgaria watched as this colossus collapsed before them. Shred into pieces, Constantinople and the remnant Byzantine Empire must have presented an irresistible temptation for Bulgaria. Thus, while the usurping crusaders lorded over Constantinople, the Bulgarian kings hastened to capture as much territory as possible in southeastern Europe. It was a paradoxical situation: the crusaders saw the Bulgarians as intruders into the lands of Byzantium, whereas the Bulgarians, having spent seven centuries on those same lands, saw the Latin arrivals as intruders without any rights over the conquered territory.

The mediaeval way of settling territorial disputes after failed negotiations is clear: war. Even Innocent III was unable to stop this from happening. The successful diplomatic manoeuvres through which Bulgaria ended up in the Catholic camp were rendered largely meaningless by the military campaigns of the young Latin Empire. There was a discrepancy in both words and deeds between the pope and those who had ostensibly marched off to war inspired by him and driven by his will. It should be noted that a large part of the Greek aristocracy in the cities located within disputed territories had sought help from Kaloyan – something unthinkable previously. Kaloyan ordered all Thracian cities under crusader rule to prepare for a general uprising. Nicetas Choniates explains:

Thus he [Kaloyan] ordered those Rhōmaioi who had approached him for help to go back to their home towns, gradually to prepare for a rebellion and, wherever possible, to hurt the Latins until he came to the rescue. When they returned to their homeland they did indeed manage, with help from the Bulgarians, to rouse the cities of Thrace and Macedonia. One sequel of that was that the Latins, who had captured those cities, were for their most part slaughtered or forced to flee for their lives to Constantinople.²⁰

Geoffrey of Villehardouin concurs:

Now the Greeks, who were very disloyal, still nourished treachery in their hearts. They perceived at that time that the Franks were so scattered over the land that each had his own matters to attend to. So they thought they could the more easily betray them. They took envoys therefore privily, from all the cities in the land, and sent them to Johannizza, the King of Wallachia and Bulgaria, who was still at war with them as he had been aforetime. And they told Johannizza they would make him emperor, and give themselves wholly to him, and slay all the Franks. So they swore that they would obey him as their lord, and he swore that he would defend them as though they were his own people. Such was the oath sworn.²¹

That proposal provided a unique opportunity for Kaloyan to consolidate enormous territories under his rule with the support of the local Byzantine aristocracy and, moreover, mount an

²⁰ Никита Хониат. 'История'. Гръцки извори за българската история, Съставили и редактирали: Михаил Войнов, Василка Тъпкова-Займова, Любомир Йончев, Том XI, стр.73; [Nicetas Choniates, 'Historia', *FGHB*, Editors: Mihail Voinov, Vasilka Tapkova-Zaimova, Lubomir Yonchev. Old Greek-Bulgarian bi-lingua. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/11/gal/11_073.html. (Accessed 10.05.2018). My English translation.

²¹ Geoffrey de Villehardouin. *Memoirs or Chronicle of The Fourth Crusade and The Conquest of Constantinople*. Frank T. Marzials (trans.). J.M.Dent, London, 1908, page 87; Retrived from : <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/villehardouin.asp>. (Accessed 13.05.2018).

attack on Constantinople and fulfil his dream of becoming emperor of the Greeks and Bulgarians. This was a far more enticing prospect than even the royal crown, so he set about pursuing it by all means available. At the same time, Kaloyan expanded his diplomatic efforts, seeking new alliances that would help him realise his goals. At least this is what we learn from a letter from Henry, Baldwin's brother, to Innocent III, dated 5 June 1205. In describing the battle at Adrianople, the circumstances in which the Latin Emperor was taken prisoner and enslaved, and the latter's further plight, Henry, also there, wrote *inter alia* as follows:

But here is what else has been happening that we were afraid of and which we happened to hear by word of mouth: from the letter of the Vlach himself [i.e. Kaloyan], that we captured together with his envoys, we learned about his alliance with the Turks and other enemies of the Cross of Jesus; we therefore forwarded it to Your Apostolic Holiness in both languages.²²

The letter in question, captured by the crusaders, shows that Kaloyan was acting on a grand scale and had been underestimated, at least initially, by the leaders of the Fourth Crusade. Rebuffed by them, he became the biggest threat to their continued existence.

It is quite unlikely that Innocent III held any high hopes regarding Kaloyan's loyalty. It is fair to say that he had done everything in his power and made the utmost concessions to the Bulgarian kingdom to ensure the future prosperity of the Catholic Church in the East. Of course, in such turbulent times, it must have been difficult to predict the long-term outcome of such a move. Being a brilliant tactician, Innocent III planted the seeds from which his successors could have potentially reaped the harvest. Innocent's politics have been the subject of numerous studies, probably more than research conducted on the Fourth Crusade. His broad interest in international politics and in strengthening the power of the Church is reflected by the approximately 6,000 letters he wrote between 1198 and 1216.²³ This number is striking evidence of Innocent's diplomatic activity. He pushed the limits of Papal power so high that probably none of his successors in the Middle Ages was able to reach a similar level. As Johannes Haller describes: 'The pope is Lord and Master of all things, because his office commands him to show justice to sinners and to punish their sins. Thus he becomes, by reason

²² Henry of Flanders. 'Letter to Pope Innocent III from June 1205'. *FLHB*, Corpus III, p.367. The original text in Latin: ['Ecce tamen, quod verebatur, hoc accidit, et quod fama canebat publica quodque per litteras ipsius Blachi confederationem ipsius cum Turcis et ceteris crucis Christi inimicis continentes edocti fuimus, quas etiam a nobis cum nuntiis ipsius interceptas apostolatui vestro in utraque lingua transmisimus']. Retrieved from :http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/3/gal/3_367.html. (Accessed 09.05.2018). My English translation.

²³ Jane Sayers. *Innocent III. Leader of Europe 1198-1216*. Longman, London and New York, 1994, p.87.

of his spiritual power, judge over rulers and lord of the whole world, bishop and emperor in a single person...'.²⁴ The tendency to glorify Innocent reaches unacceptable levels with some scholars: 'He won the pagans, converted the schismatics of Wallachia and Bulgaria, reunited Armenia – too long separated – and finally re-attached Greece to the Church'.²⁵ Ironically, this article is named 'Innocent III: Victim of Partisan Historians' originally published in 1858 and reprinted 1994. The claims are far-fetched and can be criticised on many different levels. In regard to this thesis and the reign of Kaloyan, the deeds of Innocent need to be carefully examined without bias and exaggeration.. For his part, Kaloyan got out of this deal everything that he needed; having tried, to no avail, to reach a treaty with the knights, he began the expansion of his kingdom, fighting indiscriminately with all his might anyone and everyone that stood in his path, irrespective of their faith.

The hidden information behind Kaloyan's grave

Kaloyan's personality and his methods were both quite interesting and controversial. His family originated from the respected and fearless Bulgarian aristocracy (*Boyars*) who increasingly aspired for independence due to crises in the Byzantine government and the empire's inability to protect its northern borders. General left alone by the Byzantines, the Bulgarians learned to fend for themselves and, to a limited measure, self-rule.²⁶ When they had to fight the barbarians north of the Danube, they organised their own self-defence.²⁷ Sometimes, however, the Bulgarian population would make deals with the invaders and act in collusion with them.²⁸ Their alliance with the Cumans is an excellent example of this. This increased autonomy became an armed rebellion in 1186, driven by a desire to restore Bulgarian statehood. Kaloyan's brothers, Ivan Asen and Petar, led the uprising which, following several

²⁴ Johannes Haller. 'Lord of the Word'. *Innocent III, Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?*. James M. Powell (ed.). The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C. Second edition, 1994, pp.79-94(80).

²⁵ Friedrich Hurter 'Innocent III: Victim of Partisan Historians'. *Storia di Papa Innocenzo III*, Battezzati, Milan, 1858, pp.346-349. Re-printed: *Innocent III, Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?*. James M. Powell (ed.). The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C. Second edition, 1994, pp.13-14.

²⁶ John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. 1994, p. 9-10.

²⁷ Florin Curta. *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, p.360.

²⁸ Paul Stephenson. *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 289-300.

major military victories, ultimately achieved success. Because of this, they proclaimed themselves kings of all Bulgaria.²⁹

Kaloyan, also known as Joan, Joannitsa, or Ivanitza, was born around 1170. During the rebellion against Byzantium, he was a youth of sixteen to eighteen years and probably active in his elder brothers' cause. His name appears in Nicéas Choniates's chronicle in relation to the signing of the Lovech Peace Treaty in 1187. According to a clause in this treaty, Kaloyan was to be surrendered as a hostage to Constantinople, insurance for the Byzantine court that his brothers would refrain from further hostilities against the empire. Kaloyan took the crown in 1197 after both of his elder brothers were killed in conspiracies. Once he set about consolidating his power and expanding the territories of Bulgaria, he quickly made a name for himself as a brave and ruthless military commander, who put the fear of God in the enemy ranks. Nicéas Choniates's account of the siege and capture of the city of Varna by the Bulgarians is quite telling. The city's garrison was Byzantine and the final battle of the siege took place on Easter Day, 24 March 1203, which appears not to have mattered to Kaloyan. Choniates says:

Fearless of the sanctity of that day, and shameless before the name of Christ, which he only pronounced with his lips, egged on by blood-thirsty demons, he would push into the moat anyone he captured alive, and dump earth on top of them. This place became a common grave for all. Having destroyed the fortress walls, he returned to Moesia, celebrating the holy day with a bloody sacrifice.³⁰

Another account of Kaloyan's attitude toward conquered cities is provided by Latin Emperor Henry in a letter to his brother Godfrey of Hainaut, dated September 1206. Although the Bulgarian king had pledged clemency to Philipopolis, once he conquered the city:

... Joanicus entered the city and, reneging on his oath before God, something quite typical of him, subjected to all kinds of torture anyone he found there: from the eldest townsfolk to babies in arms, and all the nobles he treacherously destroyed, some by hanging, others by dunking

²⁹ Alexander A. Vasiliev. *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324–1453*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1958, Volume 2, p.443.

³⁰ Никита Хониат. 'История'. *Гръцки извори за българската история*. Съставили и редактирали: Михаил Войнов, Василка Тъпкова-Займова, Любомир Йончев. стр.73;[Nicetas Choniates. 'Historia', *FGHB*, Editors: Mihail Voinov, Vasilka Tapkova-Zaimova, Lubomir Yonchev]. Old Greek-Bulgarian bi-lingua, page 67. Retrived from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/11/gal/11_067.html. (Accessed 18.04.2018). My translation.

them in boiling water, still others through other methods of torment and torture that could hardly be borne by a mortal man.³¹

In the same letter, Henry also calls Kaloyan ‘an enemy of the Holy Cross’ (*Iohaniccio sancte cruces inimico crudeliter incarcerates*), implying he was unhappy with the concessions made by the pope to the Bulgarian king. Granted, this was not unjustified since his brother had been taken prisoner by the Bulgarians, but nothing in the tone of the letter left any doubt that Henry considered Bulgaria an enemy Catholic nation.

Kaloyan was not only cruel to foreigners. During one of his long absences, there was a conspiracy in Tarnovgrad to depose him. As we learn from Choniates: ‘Kaloyan returned in haste to mete out scary penalties and newly-invented kinds of death on the traitors’.³² Apparently, his cruelty was not only confined to diplomacy but permeated all aspects of his life as a mediaeval ruler. Kaloyan also suffered from a head injury, which probably caused blackouts and possibly drove him insane, which he may have expressed through bouts of savagery. This assessment is based on evidence found in the excavation of his grave, the findings of which are presented later in this thesis.

We do not have much more information regarding the personal life of the youngest Asenev brother. He married a Cumanian woman, in all likelihood a match designed to settle Bulgaria’s relations with its long-standing allies to the north. The written sources are quite succinct on this matter, but according to oral folklore, the brothers’ mother was also a Cuman. In the twelfth century, the majority of Cumans were still heathen, which raises the question of what kind of compromise Kaloyan had to make to enter into such a marriage and to what extent religion mattered to him, whether personally or politically. According to Eve Levin, marriage with pagan woman was never a problem for the Bulgarian Church.³³ This open-mindedness most likely reflected the supreme power of the Bulgarian king over the mandates of the patriarch. Kaloyan’s tolerance contrasts greatly with the measures taken by Stefan the First-

³¹ Henry of Flanders. ‘Letter to Godfrey of Hainaut from September 1206’. *FLHB*. Corpus IV, p.13. The original text in Latin: [‘Qui dum potestatem super eos haberent, civitatem ingressus, religionem iuramenti, sicut de consuetudine habet, contemnendo, quoscumque in civitate invenit, e maiori usque ad minimum diversis tormentorum generibus affecit, nobiles universos quosdam suspendio, quosdam aqua bullienti quosdam aliis tormentorum penis, que vix ab homine excogitari possent, subiiciens nequiter inte fecit.’]. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_014.html. (Accessed 09.05.2017). My translation.

³² Никита Хониат. ‘История’. *Гръцки извори за българската история*. Съставили и редактирали: Михаил Войнов, Василка Тъпкова-Займова, Любомир Йончев, стр.85. [Nicetas Choniates, ‘Historia’. *FGHB*. Editors: Mihail Voinov, Vasilka Tapkova-Zaimova, Lubomir Yonchev, p. 85]. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/11/gal/11_085.html. (Accessed 09.04.2017). My English translation.

³³ Eve Levin. *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs, 900-1700*. Cornwell University Press, London, 1989, p.155.

Crowned (1196-1228) in neighbouring Orthodox Serbia, where non-baptised people were subject to persecution, as seen in the previous chapter.

Hyperactive, merciless, ruthless, and scheming, Kaloyan managed in only ten years to build a state that established itself as an insurmountable force for anyone who had any ambitions in this part of the world. A menace to Byzantines and Latins alike, a man capable of reneging on any treaty, Kaloyan simply had to be stopped. His might on the battlefield was only matched by his cunning in negotiations, a combination of skills that must have prompted his adversaries to seek other ways of disposing of him, less Kaloyan take the throne of Constantinople itself. After the capture and execution of Baldwin, the slaying in battle of Boniface of Monerrat, and the panic-fuelled escape and death of Enrico Dandolo, Kaloyan had effectively cleared the field of opponents.³⁴ But he was then murdered by conspirators during the siege of Thessaloniki. The city had already been almost conquered by his massive army, which easily overcame its defences, when Kaloyan was killed at night while sleeping in his tent, probably by the Cuman chief Manastras.³⁵ Manastras' motives and who was behind this assassination we may never know, but the results are clear: Bulgaria's momentum was halted. The siege was lifted and Kaloyan's body was salted and sent to Tarnovgrad for burial.

Thanks to archaeology, we have an amazing chance to find out exactly how Kaloyan was buried. His burial gives us much evidence concerning his religious affiliation, his attitude toward the Papacy, and his notorious cruelty. In 1972, the tomb of a thirty-five to forty-year-old man of gigantic stature (almost two metres) was discovered at the Holy Church of the Forty Martyrs in Tarnovgrad. On its left hand, the skeleton had a gold ring weighing 61.15 grams. Etched on its bezel was an animal with a pointed canine muzzle, a lion's body and tail, and eagle's talons. Around it was an inscription: 'Ring of Kaloyan' (Figure 5).

³⁴ John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. 1994, p. 87.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.91.



Figure 5. The ring of Tsar Kaloyan found in his grave. Displayed at National Historical Museum - Sofia

The body was dressed in a luxurious maroon mantle, with trimmed gold-and-pearl lace and red shoes on its feet. An analysis of the soil around the grave discovered a higher concentration of salt. This is unusual, but according to Choniates, after his murder, Kaloyan's body was salted to endure the long journey back to Tarnovgrad. There is also a scar on the skull that was probably the result of an old trauma that may have caused seizures. This aligns with contemporary evidence that Kaloyan often had bouts of unprovoked rage and cruelty. The majority of scholars accepted the evidence that this was the body of Kaloyan.³⁶ Although he was buried in the Christian tradition, the absence of the tiara and sceptre given to him by Innocent III proves beyond doubt that, except for the titles represented by these insignia, they were worthless to the Bulgarian king. Kaloyan's remains were reinterred with full state honours in Veliko Tarnovo (Tarnovgrad) in 2007.³⁷

³⁶ Веселина Инкова, *Калояновото погребение. Техничко-лабораторни изследвания*. Издателство на Българската Академия на Науките, София, 1979; [Veselina Inkova. *Kaloyan's Funeral. Technical laboratory studies*, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, 1979]. (My translation).

³⁷ 'Legendary Bulgarian King buried again 800 years later', 19.07.2007, Sofia News Agency. Retrieved from: <http://www.novinite.com/articles/79532/Legendary+Bulgarian+King+Buried+again+800+Years+after+Death> (Accessed 11.05.2018).

Although widely used as pretext by kings and emperors, religion was always sidelined by worldly aspirations. It appears that in his dealings with the world, Kaloyan used religion as a tool to achieve his political goals. At least initially, Kaloyan tried to play by the rules, offering assistance to the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire. He wrote letters proposing peace and cooperation, and explained his actions and the concerns that caused them in his correspondence with the pope. But all his attempts at diplomacy failed and his offers of assistance were rejected. His subsequent campaigns aimed at conquering the territories of the Byzantine Empire, parts of which he considered to be inherently Bulgarian, brought about a rift between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire. Whatever possibility there had been for Bulgaria to be accepted and endorsed as a Catholic country was irretrievably wasted because of Kaloyan's desire to capture the disputed territories of southern Thrace and defeat the supercilious crusaders. This was in sharp contrast with the rhetoric he used with Innocent III. Similar dissonance between military and religious authorities within the crusader movement proved detrimental to achieving its goals and ultimately brought about the complete failure of the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire.

The Bulgarian kingdom under the reigns of Kaloyan and Ivan Asen II (i.e. the period 1197-1241) was an extremely powerful factor in southeastern Europe. By missing the opportunity to lure such a powerful ally to their side and squeezed as they were by three remnant Byzantine states, the Latins gradually found themselves completely isolated in Constantinople, which they eventually also lost. Thus, the Latin Empire ended a mere fifty-seven years after it was founded. Had there been better coordination between the crusaders and the pope, and had they learned their lessons from the capture and subsequent loss of Jerusalem by their predecessors, the crusade and its conquests may have ended differently. The unification of the Church under Catholicism was nearly achieved, but slipped from their grasp as a result of short-sightedness.

The obedient successor

It is a fact that Kaloyan's successor, Boril (1207-1218), tried to restart relations with the pope and the Latin Empire. In the eyes of Catholics, Kaloyan had been anything but a humble servant to the Holy See. To erase the memory of his predecessors, Boril launched a wave of persecutions against supporters of the Asenev brothers. The legitimate heirs to the Bulgarian crown, Ivan Asen II and Alexander, were forced to flee to the Cumans and, from

there, to the Russian kingdom of Galicia-Volhynia.³⁸ After a few battles with the Latins, in which he suffered defeat, Boril radically changed his policy towards the Latin Empire. He put ended his wars with the crusaders and even signed a military alliance with Emperor Henry against Serbia in 1214.³⁹ Obviously, an alliance against Orthodox Serbia was not a problem for Boril, who chose to remain faithful to the Papacy. In 1211, he even organised a council directed against the heretics, following the Western trend, discussed in Chapter II. The path on which Boril embarked also led to profound changes to his immediate family.

Two very important dynastic marriages were arranged by Boril. In 1213, Henry married Maria of Bulgaria, daughter of Kaloyan and stepdaughter of Boril. The following year, Boril, having first abandoned Kaloyan's otherwise unknown Cuman wife, married Elizabeth of Courtenay, the daughter of Peter II of Courtenay and Yolanda of Flanders.⁴⁰ These two unions provide conclusive evidence of the re-orientation of Boril's foreign policy and also reveals the far-sighted attitude of the new Latin Emperor, Henry of Flanders.

The brief reign of Baldwin makes it impossible to judge him on his merits, but Henry certainly proved to be the most successful emperor of the short-lived empire. By skilfully combining military strategy with diplomacy, Henry managed to establish the Latin Empire as a stable factor in southeastern Europe. His peace treaty with Bulgaria enabled him to concentrate on fighting the three Greek statelets, the rulers of each of which claiming a right to the throne in Constantinople. From a geopolitical and strategic point of view, this was the correct move to permanently cement their position in Constantinople and southeastern Europe – the Bulgarian kingdom was too powerful at that time, so a direct confrontation with it would threaten their continued existence.

Boril responded positively to Henry's policies and distanced himself from Kaloyan and his actions during the final years of his reign. And not just in his military and foreign policy. It was under the Papacy's influence that Boril convened a Church council to deal with Bogomilism heresy, which had its roots in Bulgaria and became the basis for future dualistic religious movements such as the Cathar heresy. Such heresies posed a serious threat to conventional churches, whether Orthodox or Catholic, and while the Orthodox Church was

³⁸ Alexandru Madgearu. *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire, 1185–1280*. 2017, p.175.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.190.

⁴⁰ John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest* 1994, pp.100-101. Fine says: 'To seal the alliance Henry, a widower married Boril's "daughter" (in fact she was Kaloyan's daughter whom Boril had adopted when he married Kaloyan's widow). The wedding probably occurred in 1213. Soon thereafter Boril married Henry's niece, the daughter of Henry's sister'.

preoccupied with its own survival after the fall of Constantinople, the pope organised a massive campaign aimed at eradicating heretics across Europe. This campaign launched by the Catholic Church in 1209 against all heresies was echoed in Bulgaria by the council convened by Boril in 1211. Boril presided over the proceedings, dressed in his stately finery, and he personally headed the investigation of the Bogomils who were brought before the council. The ensuing dispute ended with Bogomil views being rejected and its adherents anathematised. Some of them returned to the official faith, but those who did not were subjected to torture and banishment. *King Boril's Synodicon*, issued on behalf of the council, outlines the following interesting facts:

As soon as he knew that, the pious King Boril, driven by divine aspiration, sent for them to be gathered all around his kingdom like so many bunches of weeds and ordered that a council of the Church be convened. And when all the bishops had gathered, and all the priests and monks, and also all the Boyars and a large multitude of selected townsfolk, and when the king heard that all had gathered, he instantly emerged in a bright red mantle, sat in one of the great churches of the time and the Council sat on his right side and on his left. Then he ordered the proselytisers of heresy brought in, but he did not refute them right away but instead lured them into a trap with great cunning by telling them to free themselves of any fear and to boldly state their blasphemous teaching.⁴¹

This represented radically different Bulgarian policy than under Kaloyan. A drastic change was taking place within a period of less than ten years. It is not an overstatement to say that Bulgaria was seeking its place on the political and religious stage, sometimes manoeuvring with skill, other times less so. Making the right choice was essential for the consolidation of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom and for the overall self-identification of Bulgaria as part of the Orthodox or Catholic Church. For the first time, the policy of Innocent III concerning the inclusion of Bulgaria into the Catholic world seemed justified and promising. Before his death in 1216, Innocent witnessed this council against the heretics in 1211 in Bulgaria and the two dynastic marriages between the Latin Empire and Bulgaria. These were events that must surely have pleased Innocent III in the sunset of his life.

⁴¹ Анна Мария Тотоманова (превела от старобългарски). 'Синодик на цар Борил'. Емил Димитров (ред.). *Сборник "Държава и Църква през XIII в.* Славика Радомир, София, 1999, с. 79. [Anna Maria Totomanova (translator from Old Bulgarian to modern Bulgarian). 'King Boril's Synodicon'. Emil Dimitrov (ed.). *Corpus 'State and Church in XIII century'*. Slavika Radomir, Sofia, 1999, p.79]. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/psb/psb_2.htm. (Accessed 18.04.2018). (My English translation).

The choice of Ivan Asen II

The policies of Boril, however, were not to the liking of many of the noblemen in Tarnovgrad. Resentment for the king and his chosen course grew until it erupted into a rebellion. The organisers had the foresight to establish contact with Ivan Asen II, the son of Ivan Asen I, first monarch of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom and brother of Kaloyan. Ivan Asen returned from exile with an army of mercenaries and, with inside help, he encircled Tarnovgrad. After a prolonged siege, he ultimately conquered the Bulgarian capital and proclaimed himself king, capturing and blinding Boril in the process. All these events are described with precision by George Akropolites in his *History*:

There [in exile] he [Ivan Asen II] had spent enough time and, having gathered around him a mob of Russians, came back to reclaim his patrimony. He declared war on Boril, defeated him and became ruler of a far from small piece of land. Whereas Boril locked himself up in Tarnovo and was besieged for seven years. His people, having lost spirit, sided with Ivan Asen. As he tried to flee, Boril was captured and blinded and thus Ivan Asen became the ruler of the entire Bulgarian land.⁴²

Ivan Asen's mercenary army was certainly made up of Russians, but it was probably also supplemented by Cumans and Bulgarians disgruntled with Boril. The 'seven year-long' siege must have been an exaggeration – there is no evidence of such a long military campaign, at the time of Boril's reign (1207-1218), although the siege was surely prolonged. Two important events marked the beginning of this mutiny against the pro-Western king, which would ultimately lead to the Boril's deposition and the return of Bulgaria to Orthodoxy. On 11 June 1216, Emperor Henry died, followed a month later by Innocent. Thus, the most successful Latin Emperor, a key ally of Boril's Bulgaria, and possibly the most successful pope, a champion of the inclusion of Bulgaria in the Catholic Church, were gone almost simultaneously. Both were reliable pillars supporting Boril and his rule. Their loss was a heavy blow for the Bulgarian king and for his entire foreign and religious policy. It did not take long for the opposition to organise itself and bring him down. It was no more than 18-20 months from July 1216 until the moment Ivan Asen II officially ascended the throne in the spring of 1218, fewer than two years after the deaths of Henry and Innocent (two key moments who probably triggered Ivan Asen's actions). If we factor in the long siege of Tarnovgrad mentioned in the written sources, it can be assumed that the recruitment and transportation of the

⁴² Георги Акрополит. 'История'. *Гръцки извори за българската история*. Том 8, София, БАН, 1972, стр.157-158. [George Akropolites. 'History'. *FGHB*. Volume 8, Sofia, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1972, pp.157-158.]. Old Greek – Bulgarian bi-lingua, p. 157-158. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/8/gal/8_158.html. (Accessed 09.05.2018). My English translation.

mercenary army from Russia took between six and twelve months. This was a record time for the organisation of a conspiracy and the movement of such a large group of people, especially considering the means of communications in this period. There is no doubt that the deaths of Henry and Innocent were the signal that Ivan Asen and the disgruntled noblemen had been waiting for.

Ivan Asen II, the son of Asen I, proved himself a shrewd politician and a strong king, both at the negotiating table and on the battlefield. His twenty-three year rule was marked by tremendous progress in every field – it is not for nothing that he is considered one of the most successful Bulgarian monarchs. Under him, Bulgaria expanded its territory to an unprecedented size, not just through military campaigns but also through diplomatic alliances and matrimonial unions. Ivan Asen II was the first Bulgarian king to mint gold coinage and he was a patron of commerce. However, what he is mostly for remembered are his interactions with the Latin Empire, the Papacy, and other Orthodox countries.

From the very outset of his rule, Ivan Asen demonstrated his diplomatic genius. In 1218, the Hungarian king Andrew II was returning home from a crusade and was detained by Ivan Asen.⁴³ The Bulgarian king gave his consent to pass through his lands on the condition that the territories of Belgrade and Branicevo be returned to Bulgaria.⁴⁴ Andrew agreed and a treaty was sealed by the marriage of Ivan Asen II and Anna-Maria, the Hungarian king's daughter.⁴⁵ But this was not a straightforward deal. Lilia Zabolotnaia explains the situation in her remarkable book focussed on the women of the Asen dynasty: 'Andrew II accepted the offer under one condition – the blessing of the Pope. For this reason, the marital contract, has been delayed, but finally, namely in 1221, has reached the respective blessing, the one Pope Honor II. Anna-Maria has been officially declared empress of Bulgaria'.⁴⁶ So the Bulgarian king divorced his wife and married the Hungarian Catholic princess, thus regaining control of these once-Bulgarian lands. In 1221, the pope gave his blessing to their union, effectively giving his seal of approval for the return of these lands to Bulgaria. The very fact that Ivan

⁴³ Archdeacon Thomas of Split. 'History of the Bishops of Salona and Split'. Damir Karbic, Mirjana Sokol, James Ross Sweeney(eds). *Central European Medieval Texts*. Central European University Press, Budapest, 2006, p. 165.

⁴⁴ Fine, John V. A. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. 1994, p.129.

⁴⁵ Attila Bárány. 'II. András balkáni külpolitikája'. [Andrew II's foreign policy in the Balkans]. Kerny, Terézia; Smohay, András (ed.). *II. András and Székesfehérvár*. [Andrew II and Székesfehérvár] (in Hungarian). Székesfehérvári Egyházmegyei Múzeum, Székesfehérvár, 2012. p. 129–173.

⁴⁶ Lilia Zabolotnaia. 'Women and power in the history of the Asan dynasty'. *Journal: Tyragetia*. Vol.VI, No. 2, National Museum of History of Moldova, Chişinău, 2012, p.55 (pp.53-62).

Asen waited and consented for papal blessing is a demonstration that he did not want to sever ties with the Papacy.

In 1228, Latin Emperor Robert of Courtenay died and his throne was inherited by the underage Baldwin II. There was a minor possibility for Ivan Asen to become regent to the young emperor, effectively obtaining the throne in Constantinople. Such a possibility would have been wildly far-fetched if relations with the Papacy were tense. We learn about this from the late-fifteenth century chronicle of the Venetian Marino Sanuto (The younger).⁴⁷ In 1229, another man was chosen as regent, John of Brienne, king of Jerusalem, although he did not take office until 1231 since he was preoccupied with the Fifth Crusade. Meanwhile, having heard of the treaty between Ivan Asen and the Latin Empire, Theodore Komnenos Doukas of the despotate of Epirus launched an attack on Bulgaria in 1230 aimed at thwarting the further rise of Ivan Asen. This led to a great battle on the river Klokotnitsa (6km from my hometown), which helps establish two important facts.⁴⁸ First, Bulgaria, officially a Catholic state, was fighting Orthodox Epirus a mere 250 kilometres from Latin-held Constantinople. For all intents and purposes, Epirus was obliterated by this battle. In the words of George Akropolites: 'Theodore Komnenos was decisively crushed by the Bulgarians and Scythians (Cumans). He was taken prisoner with many of his closest relatives, his senior officials and nobles, together with all of their belongings'.⁴⁹ After this battle, Ivan Asen proclaimed himself 'King of Bulgarians and Greeks' in all royal edicts.⁵⁰ The battle at Klokotnitsa was also a welcome development for the Latin Empire since, in practical terms, it ended Epirus as a factor in southeastern European politics. Second, Ivan Asen II continued to use heathen Cumans as mercenaries. This gives us all the more reason to ask ourselves: to what extent was religion a leading motive and not a mere tool for the attainment of imperial goals? In 1231, John of Brienne officially ascended to the throne of the Latin Empire, triggering a lightning response by Ivan Asen, who, feeling neglected by the pope and the Latin barons, began exploring the return of Bulgaria to Orthodoxy. The king sent the Catholic primate, Vassily, into exile on the

⁴⁷ Angela Maria Caracciolo. 'Marin Sanudo il giovane: le opere e lo stile'. Fabio Serra (ed.) *Studi Veneziani*, Estratto Offprint, Pisa, 2008, pp. 351-390.

⁴⁸ Florin Curta. *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Age 500–1250*. 2006, p. 387.

⁴⁹ Георги Акрополит. 'История'. *Гръцки извори за българската история*. Том 8, стр.161. [George Akropolites. 'Historia'. *FGHB*. Volume 8, Sofia, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1972. Old Greek-Bulgarian bi-lingua, p. 161]. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/8/gal/8_161.html (Accessed 18.04.2018). My English translation.

⁵⁰ А. Даскалова, М. Райкова. *Грамоти на българските царе*. Проф. Марин Дринов, София, 2005, с. 30л [A. Daskalova, M. Raikova. *Diplomas of the Bulgarian kings*. Prof. Marin Drinov Publishers, Sofia 2005, page 30. Ivan Asen II. *Trade agreement with Dubrovnik*. Original text: [† **ѦСѢНЬЦРѢ** **БЪЛГАРЪНЪНГРЪКОМЪ**†]. My translation.

Athos peninsula, where he died in 1234. Negotiations with Nicaea over Bulgaria's return were protracted because of the reluctance of the Orthodox patriarchs, headed by Germanus II, to recognise the Bulgarian Church as an autocephalous patriarchate. Nonetheless, at a council convened in 1235 in Lampsak, Asia Minor, the four Orthodox patriarchs officially proclaimed the reinstatement of the autocephalous [independent] Bulgarian Patriarchate based in Tarnovgrad. This happened with the decisive help of the Nicaean Emperor John III Ducas Vataces, who had sent to the patriarchs the following message:

Our sovereign Kingdom prays and calls upon Your Fatherhood to grant our request addressed to you by composing a message and sending it to my Kingdom in endorsement of your decision as well as mine to proclaim and grant to the city of Tarnovo a rank equal to yours, that of a Patriarchate, to its Church of the Ascension of Christ, the Mother of all Churches in the Bulgarian Kingdom, because the most pious King Ivan Asen, brother and son-in-law of my Kingdom, insistently calls upon our Kingdom and our Holy Fatherhood to grant this title to his Kingdom.⁵¹

The response was positive and the council ended with the official sealing of a document whereby Bulgaria was reintroduced into the Orthodox Church. Further therein, the document reads as follows:

And so, the most pious King of Bulgarians Ivan Asen [summoned] the metropolitan bishops, archbishops, and bishops from all over his Kingdom and the most holy monks of Mount Athos. And gathered they with the Eastern King John Duca at the Pontic Sea and proclaimed as their Patriarch the most reverend and holy man, known for his righteous deeds and life, the pre-ordained Archbishop [of Tarnovo] Joachim not only verbally but by an edict of Patriarch Germanus, unto which all the Eastern Patriarchs set their hand, then sealed it and handed it to the most pious King and the newly ordained Patriarch Joachim for their everlasting glory.⁵²

⁵¹ Иван Дуйчев. *Стара българска книжнина. Книжовни и исторически паметници на Второто българско царство*. Хемус, София, 1944, Том.2, с. 44-46; [Ivan Duychev. *Old Bulgarian books, Written and historic sources of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom*. Hemus, Sofia, 1944, Volume 2, p. 44-46.]. MyEnglish translation.

⁵² Ibid., page 44-46.

This marks the official end of the 1204 union of Bulgaria with the Catholic Church and establishes its return to Orthodoxy. Immediately afterwards, the joint forces of Bulgaria and Nicaea laid siege to Constantinople, but to no avail.⁵³

It must be emphasised that the Papacy did not stand idly by. There had been several attempts by pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) to bring Bulgaria back to the Catholic Church. The pope had engaged in some busy correspondence with Ivan Asen II to try and persuade him to change his mind. Gregory also sent a message to the Hungarian bishops, with whom Bulgaria had a common border, asking them to monitor very closely the conduct of the Bulgarian king. In this message, the pope mentions another missive dispatched by him to Ivan Asen II, asking him to ensure that Bulgaria honours the 1204 union. The message to the bishops, dated 24 May 1236, reads as follows:

Since we insistently reminded through our letter the nobleman Asen to break off completely his alliance with the excommunicated Vataces and put an end to any hostility between him and the Latins, I hereby instruct you, should the above mentioned nobleman disobey our reminder to that effect, to make sure that he and all of his helpers and patrons are excommunicated from our cause and that their excommunication is publicly announced.⁵⁴

These papal directives are clear enough, although hopes that the Bulgarian king might reconsider his return to Orthodoxy were still high. After a year's waiting, though, Gregory IX undertook a more drastic measure by dispatching to Bulgaria the bishop of Perugia to personally restore relations between the Bulgarian kingdom and the Catholic Church. In this context, the pope wrote Ivan Asen II a second letter, dated 21 May 1237, asking that the bishop be received and heard with respect, and also calling upon the Bulgarian king to cooperate with the Latin Empire:

Therefore, we decided to insistently ask Your Honour and remind you of our desire that you accept with grace and treat with respect that same Bishop when he comes unto you, and to try

⁵³ Claudia Sode, Sarolta Takács. *Novum Millennium: Studies on Byzantine History and Culture*. Ashgate Publishing, New York, 2001, pp.244-245.

⁵⁴ Pope Gregory IX. 'Letter to Strigoniensi and Colocensi archiepiscopis'. *FLHB*, corpus IV, p.51. The original text in Latin: ['Cum nobilem virum Assanum litteris nostris monerimus dillgenter ut a sociatate Vatacii excommunicati omnino recedens ab infestatione desisteret Latinorum mandamus quatenus si dictus nobilis monitis nostris acquiescere non curaverit in hac parte ipsum et omnes in hoc adiutores ac iautores ipsius excommunicatos curetis, ac eos excommunicatos publice...']. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_051.html. (Accessed 09.05.2018). My English translation.

to believe in and fulfil successfully what he decides to instruct you on our behalf. And, in the meantime, that you would try and provide every assistance, advice and kindness to our beloved unto Christ's son, the glorious Emperor of Constantinople, J[ohn of Brienne].⁵⁵

The outcome of the visit, and whether the bishop of Perugia managed to reach Bulgaria in the first place, remains unclear. Either way, by the following year Ivan Asen II was openly declared a schismatic and Gregory IX urged the Hungarians to invade Bulgaria, promising them in return the kind of indulgence that was granted to crusaders leaving for the Holy Land. In a wrathful papal missive sent to King Béla IV of Hungary, dated 27 January 1238, Ivan Asen is called a schismatic and the letter calls for retribution through military means, a sure sign that all other means have been attempted to no avail and that the pope has declared the union between the Catholic Church and Bulgaria ended. The letter contains the following passages that have a direct bearing on this study:

Among their number is Asen, who, by abandoning the unity of the Church and declining to be among the flock of St. Peter, by renouncing his example and life cause, rejected the pasture of the Holy Community, while at the same time adopting and defending within his land the heretics that, they say, were swarming in those lands and contaminating them. For he deserves to have their blood spilt upon them, in retribution for his injustice.⁵⁶

Gregory IX generously promises indulgences to every knight who would consent, at his own cost, to attack Bulgaria. He urges:

To all the bishops appointed in Hungary to preach the Word of the Cross against said Asen and his land, we shall grant to the crusaders acting there in person and at their own cost the same

⁵⁵ Pope Gregory IX. 'Letter to King Béla IV of Hungary from 21 May 1237'. *FLHB*, Corpus IV, Sofia, 1981, p. 56. The original text in Latin: ['Ideoque nobilitatem tuam rogandam duximus attente et monendam, mandantes, quatenus eundem Episcopum, cum ad te venerit, imo nos ipse verius benigne recipiens et honeste pertractans, que tibi ex parte nostra duxerit exponenda, credere studeas et efficaciter adimplere. Interim autem taliter elaboras prestando Carissimo in Christo filio nostro I, Constantinopolitano Imperatori...']. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_056.html. (Accessed 09.05.2018). My English translation.

⁵⁶ Pope Gregory IX. 'Letter to Béla IV of Hungary from 27 January 1238'. *FLHB*, Corpus IV, p. 64. The original text in Latin: ['De quorum numero perfidus est Assanus, qui ab ecclesie unitate recedens et de Petri ovibus esse recusans, euis pasci doctrine verbo operationis exemplo, et sacre communionis pabulo contradicit, receptat in terra sua hereticos et defensat, quibus tota terra ipsa infecta dicitur et repleta. Cum igitur dignum sit, ut sanguis eorum veniat super eos iniquitate sua velit...']. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_064.html. (Accessed 18.04.2018). My English translation.

indulgence as to the crusaders who are leaving to provide their assistance to their brethren in the Holy Land.⁵⁷

Towards the end of this letter, the pope becomes all the more insistent – his words can be interpreted as a call for a new crusade, this time against Bulgaria:

Should you, inflamed by love for the Law of God, take up arms against them, and should your wrath erupt against those who became precursors of the Antichrist or rather, those who like some Antichrists themselves persecute our faith, we passionately beseech Your Majesty and insistently call upon you, the most pious of kings, and we take your oath sworn in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, that you will rise in defence of your Christ, for the destruction of that evil and wicked people who slander and mock the name of Christianity.⁵⁸

Gregory calls the Bulgarians antichrists and an evil and wicked people, and his message is direct and clear: he demands a holy war against Bulgaria. This threat cannot be underestimated by Ivan Asen since it was widely known that Gregory was very serious regarding participation in crusades.

Around this same time in Western Europe, another maelstrom of events caused the first excommunication of the German emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen from the Church. Gregory writes to Frederick: ‘do not put yourself in a position where I have to take action against you; go on a crusade as promised, or else’.⁵⁹ Frederick was indeed excommunicated for various of reasons and his disregard of papal opinion.⁶⁰ This fact was probably known to Ivan Asen and he understood the severity of this action. Excommunication was used as a punishment against rogue rulers and very often achieved the desired results for the pope. Joseph Francois Michaud describes the characters of Frederick and Gregory as ‘both animated by

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.64. The Latin text : ‘...et universis episcopis per Ungariam consitutis nostris damus litteris in mandatis, ut contra dictum Assanum et terram suam predicent verbum crucis, illam cruce signatis illuc in personis vel rebus laborantibus indulgentiam concedentes, que conceditur conceditur transeuntibus in subsidium terre sancte.’

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.65. The Latin text : ‘...si zelo divine lagis accensus accingaris in eos, et in illos exarserit ira tua, qui antichristi precursores effecti, vel potius antichristi fidem nostram immaniter persequuntur : excellentiam tuam affectuose rogamus et a te, Christianissime Principum, instanter exposcimus, obsecrantes per Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, et per aspersionem sanguinis crucifixi, ut exurgas in adiutorium Christi tui ; exurgas ad contritionem nationis prave atque perverse, que multis insultat opprobriis nomini christiano.’

⁵⁹ David Abulafia. *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor*. Allen Lane/ Penguin Press, London, 1988, p.165.

⁶⁰ Laurie Shepard. *Courting Power: Persuasion and Politics in the Early Thirteenth Century*. Garland Publishing , New York, 1999, p.115

boundless ambition, jealous to excess of their power, implacable in their revenge and always ready to employ the arms which the church or fortune placed in their hands'.⁶¹ Frederick was excommunicated two more times, by Gregory in 1239 and by Innocent IV in 1245.⁶² It is important to note that the West also had its internal issues, which may be one of the reasons why Bulgaria began to search for more local religious and political stability.

The death of Ivan Asen's second wife, Anna-Maria of Hungary, in 1237 made the political situation in Bulgaria even worse. King Ivan Asen II married for a third time and his third wife was Orthodox woman Irene Komnene Doukaina, daughter of Despot Theodore Komnenos Doukas of Epirus. This move by the Bulgarian king is an additional evidence that Catholicism was no longer among his priorities.

Throughout 1238, the pope wrote dozens of letters to the Hungarian bishops and the king of Hungary, calling for a crusade against Bulgaria. His insistent requests appear more like orders than requests, the aim being for the Hungarian army to march against 'the Godless heretics and schismatics in the lands of Asen and against the schismatic Asen himself', as he stated in a letter dated 8 August 1238.⁶³ But it appears that the pope finally exhausted all possible means to bring Ivan Asen II and his kingdom back to Catholicism. In his letters to the Hungarian king, he directly calls for the raising of an army against Bulgaria, promising indulgences in return for compliance. This amounted essentially to preparation for another crusade. The fact that Bulgaria had indeed reverted to Orthodoxy in 1235 was a bitter blow to the Papacy. However, relations between Bulgaria and Hungary were not exclusively based on their religious differences – they had much deeper political ties.

The marriage of Ivan Asen to Anna Maria of Hungary (1204–1237), the daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary, and the settlement of border disputes stopped the Hungarian king from undertaking any overtly hostile actions against Bulgaria, irrespective of the pope's insistence. But the angry letters and threats of Gregory did have some effect. Ivan Asen changed his policy, broke off his alliance with John Ducas Vataces, achieved rapprochement with the Latins, and, jointly with them, launched a campaign to drive the Nicaeans out of

⁶¹ Joseph Francois Michaud. *Histoire des Croisades*. W. Robinson (ed. trans.) George Routledge & Co, London, 1852, p. 50.

⁶² Christopher Kleinhenz (ed). *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia*, Routledge, New York, 2004, p.508; Bull of Innocent IV, Lyons, 1245. Published online by UBC Library IT on May 15, 2015. Retrived from <https://rbcs.library.ubc.ca/a1/>. (Accessed 19.04.2018).

⁶³ Pope Gregory IX. 'Letter to all bishops of Hungary ,from 8 August 1238'. *FLHB*, Corpus IV, Sofia, 1981p. 73. The original text in Latin: ['...contra impios hereticos et schismaticos terre Assani, ipsumque Assanum schismaticum....']. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_073.html (Accessed 09.05.2017). My English translation.

Thrace.⁶⁴ Ivan Asen was driven to undertake such acts of reconciliation under the threat of yet another crusade to rescue the Latin Empire, which in all likelihood would sweep across Bulgaria and lay waste to it. At this time, there was also the threat of a Mongol invasion.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, perhaps in 1239-1240, a sixty thousand-strong crusader army marched from the northwest to the southeast to attack the Nicaeans, who were then active in Thrace, and captured Curulon (Çorlu) in the process.⁶⁶ Soon afterwards, Ivan Asen made peace with the Nicaeans while remaining on good terms with the Latins. In the final two years of his life, he fought successfully against the Mongols in the north, which shows that he felt reassured with Thrace and Macedonia at his back.⁶⁷ But despite the partial warming of relations between Ivan Asen II and the crusaders, mostly as a result of the active policy of intimidation on the part of the pope, such rapprochement was more military and political than anything else.

There is no evidence of any change in the religious course of Bulgaria, which remained firmly Orthodox from 1235 onwards. A letter from Pope Innocent IV (1243-1256), to the next Bulgarian king, Kaliman I Asen (1241-1246), dated 21 March 1245, proves this. In this letter, which is full of verbose preaching and instruction supported with examples from biblical history, the pope makes the following request to the Bulgarian king: 'We ask you and we beseech you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to not postpone any further but return to your union with the Holy Roman Church'.⁶⁸ This letter was never answered. Bulgaria at this time was rattled by infighting over the newly vacated throne of the great Ivan Asen, while in the north there was an increased threat from the Mongols, with whom the Bulgarians did not get along as they had with the Cumans. The desire of the Papacy to bring back Bulgaria at any cost to the Catholic Church is easy to explain. In a short period of time, the Second Bulgarian Kingdom had managed to grow into a major factor on the political scene in southeastern Europe, so the Papacy's willingness to view such a powerful state a potential ally to the ailing Latin Empire is understandable. But the opportunity to gain huge swaths of land and masses of people slipped out of the pope's hands after 1235. This was not something that can be easily

⁶⁴ Alexandru Madgearu. *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire, 1185–1280*. 2017, p.219.

⁶⁵ István Vásáry. *Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, p.64.

⁶⁶ Jonathan Riley-Smith. *The Crusades: A History*. Third Edition, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, New York, 2014, p.214.

⁶⁷ John Giebfried. 'The Mongol Invasions and the Aegean World (1241–61)'. *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 2013, 28 (2), p. 129–39.

⁶⁸ Pope Innocent IV. 'Letter to Kaliman I Asen from 21 March 1245'. *FLHB*. Corpus IVp. 91. The original text in Latin: ['Rogamus et obsecramus in domino Iesu Christo, quod ad unitatem sacrosante Romane ecclesie redire non differas....']. Retrived from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_091.html. (Accessed 09.05.2018).

overlooked and we see ample evidence of active diplomacy on the part of the popes aimed at reversing this trend. The popes can be credited with making incredible efforts and giving the best of themselves to win back and keep Bulgaria in the Catholic community. However, the centrifugal forces of the military and political situation in the early thirteenth century were not favourable to the attainment of this goal, leading Bulgaria to return to its Orthodox roots. Perhaps better coordination between the leaders of the Fourth Crusade and the pope with respect to Bulgaria would have reinforced mutual trust between the Bulgarian kings and the Catholics from the outset, while a stronger Latin Empire would have subsequently attracted its neighbours more successfully.

Conclusion

As we analyse the motives of the three Bulgarian kings under whose reigns Bulgaria was part of the family of Catholic nations, we can conclude that, with the possible exception of Boril, they were motivated exclusively by the political and military interests of Bulgaria. Religion and Bulgaria's relationship to either Christian group was merely a bargaining chip, used to consolidate the young state. Both Kaloyan and Ivan Asen II paid lip service to the Papacy yet were ready to renege and violate their agreement with the pope in exchange for territorial or political gain. Initially, Boril pursued a similar policy, but then executed a complete about-face and remained loyal to the Papacy until the end of his reign. This ultimately led to his deposition. It is clear that Bulgaria's five century bond with the Orthodox Church was not something that could be forgotten overnight, and any attempt to change its religious alignment was seen by many as treason. It would be naive to claim that in these brief thirty-one years, the Catholic Church managed to strike deep roots in Bulgaria. But this failure was not for lack of trying. The efforts toward a permanent union between Bulgaria and the Catholic Church had been titanic, marking the peak of the diplomatic skills of Pope Innocent III and his successors.

Although at first glance it may appear that all the parties in this conflict were driven by different motives, on closer analysis it is clear that religious motivations were sidelined by military and political goals and ambitions. Even in such a deeply religious epoch, when faith and the fear of God's punishment directed human conduct, still the thirst for power and territory took the upper hand for all the participants in these dramatic events. To the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade, these events are represented by the conquests of Zara and Constantinople and the rejection of peace overtures made by a newly-Catholicised Bulgaria. To Bulgaria, these events were the never-ending wars with Byzantium, the use of the heathen Cumans as

mercenaries, and the constant manoeuvring between the Papacy and Constantinople during the time of Kaloyan. To the three Greek statelets that emerged amid the ruins of the Byzantine Empire, such events were the mutual claims to the throne of Constantinople and to the title of patriarch. By all appearances, all of these events were dominated by a hunger for more power and territory, while religion, though used as a pretext in some cases, was not a dominant motivation but rather a convenient excuse, to be brought up where necessary.

The internal relations between the three Greek statelets of Nicaea, Trebizond, and Epirus are also of interest and merit further study. These statelets, each of which achieved a measure of success in its fight against the Latin Empire, began to challenge each other over their respective rights to their common Byzantine origins even as their allegiance to the Orthodox Church was sidelined in pursuit of a more important agenda. A thorough analysis of their mutual relations and those with the Latin Empire will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter V

Three Kingdoms, One Empire, and Only One Capital: There is No Substitute for Victory

Introduction

Whereas the goals and motives of the knights of the Fourth Crusade have been thoroughly studied and analysed in Western historiography by scholars like Thomas Madden, Jonathan Riley-Smith, Jonathan Phillips, Christopher Tyerman, and Hans Meyer (discussed in Chapter I), there are still some ambiguities as to the motives and goals of the remaining states, especially the three Greek kingdoms formed after the collapse of Byzantine Empire. What is the situation amongst them? Are they united by Orthodox religious motives or they are divided by individual imperial ambitions to restore Byzantine Empire? There had hardly been a similar situation in world history with so many young and emerging states striving, at any cost, to put themselves on the political map. Examples include the Latin Empire, founded in 1204, the Greek Empires of Nicaea and Trebizond and Despotate of Epirus, likewise founded in 1204, and the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, proclaimed in 1186. While the motives and objectives of the Bulgarian kingdom were examined in depth in the previous chapter, the collaboration and rivalry between the three young Greek statelets will be reviewed in this chapter. We will examine their acts and motives as a group, without overlooking the individual peculiarities of each of them as a political entity in their own rights. The similarities between these successors to the Byzantine Empire are too many, while perhaps the biggest difference between them was the territory in which each of them was located. They shared a common past and the goals that they set for themselves in the thirteenth century likewise had much in common. What was different in the approaches each adopted to pursuit these goals?

Religion played an important role in the lives of mediaeval men and women. In addition to forming the bedrock of their daily existence, it oftentimes served as a potent tool in the political wheelings and dealings of the age. Therefore, having considered at some length the political relationships among and between those states, it would perhaps be worthwhile directing our attention towards their religious motives. In actual fact, it was religion that lay at the core of the chain of events triggered by the Fourth Crusade that had been inspired by the Papacy. In the political domain, relations between the Orthodox countries and the Latin Empire were dynamic and did not necessarily proceed in sync with their religious affiliations, as can

be seen from the sometime peculiar coalitions formed between them that ran against the grain of religious tradition. Meanwhile, internal relations between the Orthodox countries were contradictory. For example, to legitimise himself as the sole rightful heir to the Byzantine throne, Theodore I Laskaris, the first emperor of Nicaea, moved the seat of the patriarch of Constantinople to Nicaea and married Maria, daughter of the Latin Emperor Peter, in 1219.⁶⁹ This prompts a very significant question: what was the key motivation for the relocation of the supreme patriarchate of Byzantium? Was it to save the head of the Orthodox Church or had the patriarch simply fallen hostage to the political ambitions of the Nicaean emperor? On the other hand, the despot of Epirus, Theodore Komnenos Doukas, was crowned Byzantine emperor for the period 1225-1227 by Demetrius Chomatianus, archbishop of Ohrid, with clear recognition that Epirus was not the sole remnant of the Byzantine Empire.⁷⁰ Here again we see a high-ranking cleric deeply involved in politics take one side in a power dispute between ostensibly fraternal Orthodox states. This issue is not among the oft-discussed themes in historical literature nor is it a manner which is approached even remotely consistently. For example, Jonathan Riley-Smith notes that ‘they [the Latin rulers] had to face threats from the Vlacho-Bulgarians and the Byzantine Greeks, who had established the three émigré states of Epirus, Trebizond (Trabzon) and Nicaea, the last under Theodore Laskaris, the son-in-law of the emperor Alexius III’.⁷¹ On the religious front, the Latin Empire was also isolated from all neighbouring countries. As Van Tricht writes: ‘The Latin take-over of the patriarchal throne of Constantinople of course created a situation of conflict with the Byzantine clergy and population in the Empire. The presence of rivalrous Byzantine patriarchate in Nicaea from 1208 contributed greatly to this’.⁷²

In Western historiography, there seems to be a tendency to treat the three Greek kingdoms uniformly, placing them under the somewhat simplified common denominator of their shared animosity toward the Latin Empire. However, there were differences in the prevailing attitudes of the local population towards the knights of the Fourth Crusade and their heirs; more specific mention is due to the fact that Constantinople never rose in rebellion against its new rulers. Although the reason for that was quite mundane: the special privileges and overall better treatment accorded to the denizens of the capital city, this no doubt placed

⁶⁹ Peter Lock. *The Franks in the Aegean: 1204-1500*. Routledge, New York, 2013, p.291.

⁷⁰ Stavridou-Zafra Alkmini. *Συμβολή στο ζήτημα της αναγόρευσης του Θεοδώρου Δούκα* [Contribution to the question of the imperial proclamation of Theodore Doukas]. Αφιέρωμα στον Εμμανουήλ Κριαρά (in Greek). Centre for Byzantine Studies. Thessaloniki 1988, pp. 37–62

⁷¹ Jonathan Riley-Smith. *The Crusades: A History*. Third Edition, 2014, p. 248.

⁷² Filip van Tricht. *The Latin Renovation of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople*. 2011, p. 348.

them in a different position as compared with the populations of Nicaea, Epirus, and Trebizond. The result of all this was that people who had only a few years previously been subjects of one Byzantine emperor and one Orthodox patriarch were suddenly observed to behave in very different ways. This inevitably prompts the question: did the three Greek kingdoms share common goals and what methods did they use to attain them? The other major player, the Bulgarian kingdom, which had made remarkable progress under Kaloyan, Boril, and Ivan Asen II, and remained on the rise, was shaping up to become a highly desirable ally to the Greeks. The religious shift of the Bulgarian kingdom towards Catholicism (1204-1235) explored in the previous chapters does not seem to be of great importance for these relationships. The centuries-old territorial disputes between Byzantium and Bulgaria and the fact that Bulgarian statehood had just been restored in 1186 were all conveniently forgotten. Even the temporary conversion of Bulgaria to Catholicism did not prove repulsive enough for John Doukas Vatatzes, emperor of Nicaea, who desperately sought foreign assistance. John Vatatzes deserves special mention as an extremely shrewd diplomat in those times of turmoil. Having succeeded in persuading Ivan Asen II to break off his union with the Papacy and return to Orthodoxy, following which the allied armies of Nicaea and Bulgaria laid siege to Constantinople, he demonstrated that it was the Latin Empire that was the key adversary of the Orthodox countries in the region and that the re-capture of Constantinople should be the paramount goal for everyone who wished to see Byzantium restored. This did not happen, though, in accordance with some pre-arranged plan. Relations between the Orthodox states had been complex, alliances were hard to conclude and easy to break off whenever a more attractive option came along.

The Despotate of Epirus

The despots of Epirus had ambitions to restore the empire of Constantinople. Their first significant contribution to the weakening of the Latin Empire was the capture of Latin Emperor Peter. The young yet potent Greek statelet was fighting with all its strength against the Latin Empire. En route to Constantinople, as he was returning from his coronation in Rome in 1217, Peter was intercepted and taken prisoner by Theodore Komnenos Doukas, despot of Epirus, and eventually died in captivity.⁷³ The claims of Theodore Komnenos Doukas to the throne of Constantinople were far from unfounded: his father was the grandson of Emperor Alexius I Komnenos and uncle of emperors Alexius III Angelos and Isaac II. He had managed to reclaim

⁷³ Alexander A. Vasiliev. *History of the Byzantine Empire 324–1453*. Madison, 1958, p.520.

from the crusaders the city of Thessaloniki, although this city never again reached the level of prosperity it had enjoyed under Boniface of Montferrat, killed by the Bulgarians in 1207. Nonetheless, Thessaloniki was the second largest city in the former Byzantine Empire. In 1224, Theodore Komnenos Doukas proclaimed himself emperor and was crowned by the archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrius Chomatianus.⁷⁴ It is known that 'Even before 1224 the rulers of Epirus had been appointing bishops without reference to Nicaea'.⁷⁵ This move on his part had the practical effect of freezing both diplomatic and religious relations between the Empire of Nicaea and the Despotate of Epirus. For all intents and purposes, both of these statelets were political and religious entities in their own right, and both aspired to restore the Byzantine Empire, yet not with joint efforts but separately, in fierce competition with each other.

The same applied to the relations between Bulgaria and Epirus. Bulgaria's growing political influence was reflected in the proposal initiated by the Latin barons for Ivan Asen II to become regent to the still minor Baldwin II.⁷⁶ In the words of the Venetian historian Mario Sanuto, 'the Emperor of Zagore (Exzagororum imperator), a man of sublime glory and might in these lands at the time, promised Baldwin to reclaim with his people and by his own means the entire land of the Latin Empire'.⁷⁷ Theoretically, Ivan Asen was entirely eligible to be appointed regent to Baldwin II, since through his marriage to Anna-Maria of Hungary he was related to Emperor Robert de Courtenay. And if this was not enough, negotiations were in progress that would lead to the betrothal of Baldwin II and Elena, the daughter of Ivan Asen. According to Byzantine tradition, which was also retained by the Latin Empire, the Bulgarian king was eligible to assume the role of Basileopator, or adoptive father of the emperor. The title Basileopater was created by Byzantine Emperor Leo VI (866-912) for the father of his Armenian wife.⁷⁸ These plans on the part of Ivan Asen became known to the three Greek statelets formed after the fall of Constantinople and were perceived as a major threat to their goals and continued existence. In their desire to rebuff what they saw as the encroachments of the Bulgarian king, Epirus tried to neutralise Bulgaria on the battlefield. Theodore Komnenos

⁷⁴ Alkmini Stavridou-Zafraka. *Συμβολή στο ζήτημα της αναγόρευσης του Θεοδώρου Δούκα* [Contribution to the question of the imperial proclamation of Theodore Doukas], p.37-62.

⁷⁵ Michael Angold. *A Byzantine Government in Exile*. Oxford University press, 1975, page 20.

⁷⁶ John V. A. Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. 1994, p.123.

⁷⁷ Marino Sanudo Torsello, *Secreta fidelium Crucis*. Joshua Prawer (ed). Bongars, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, Jerusalem, 1972, II, page 72. Marino Sanudo Torsello. *The Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross (Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis)* Peter Lock (ed.trans.). Ashgate, Farnham, 2011.

⁷⁸ Robert Fossier. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Middle Ages*. Volume 1, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p.357.

(1215-1230) managed within a brief period to make substantial territorial gains by annexing middle and northern Macedonia (following the death of Stresos), as well as Albania.⁷⁹ In 1224, Theodore Komnenos launched an attack on Thessaloniki and captured the city. As liberator of Thessaloniki from Latin rule, his confidence grew enough for him to proclaim himself emperor and convince himself that he had been divinely ordained to drive the Latins out of Constantinople and assume the throne of the Byzantine Empire. However, this was a goal the ruler of the Nicaean Empire, John III Doukas Vatatzes, had also set for himself. But Bulgaria was too big a target to be easily destroyed at the moment, so diplomacy was once again the tool of choice. To protect his rear, Theodore Komnenos made an alliance with Ivan Asen II.⁸⁰ Following this, Epiroan troops marched into western Thrace, capturing as they went the cities of Mosynopolis, Xanthi, Grazianopolis, and Dimotiki, before advancing toward Adrianople, where Nicaean troops awaited them. Instead of joining forces for a concerted assault on Constantinople, the rulers came in conflict with each other.⁸¹ Theodore managed to push the Nicaeans out of Adrianople, captured the city and moved on to Visa. Meanwhile, the Latins had locked themselves up in Constantinople. The despot of Epirus could not bring himself to launch an attack on the mighty stronghold since he had no navy and Constantinople was very difficult to besiege.

Thus, the short-lived alliance with Bulgaria was once again violated as Theodore perceived the policy of Ivan Asen as a direct threat to Constantinople, the throne of which he likewise aspired toward. As a result of this rivalry, Theodore invaded Bulgaria in 1230 at the head of a large army. His Epiroan troops were intercepted at the river Klokotnitsa in Thrace on 9 March 1230 and suffered a complete and utter rout.⁸² Theodore, his family and a number of senior officials were taken prisoner to Tarnovgrad, where Komnenos was charged with conspiring against the Bulgarian king, and he was blinded in retribution.⁸³ The regular troops were set free and told to go home in God's peace, a rare gesture of magnanimity on the part of

⁷⁹ John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*, 1994, p.68

⁸⁰ Konstantinos Varzos. *Η Γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών [The Genealogy of the Komnenoi]* (in Greek). B. Thessaloniki: Centre for Byzantine Studies, University of Thessaloniki, 1984, p.612-613.

⁸¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica. 'John III Ducas Vatatzes, Emperor of Nicaea': 'John's forces were routed by Theodore when they attempted to take Adrianople later that year (1225).' Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-III-Ducas-Vatatzes>. (Accessed 21.04.2018).

⁸² John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. 1994, p. 125

⁸³ Dionysios Stathakopoulos. *A Short History of the Byzantine Empire*. I.B.Tauris, London, New York, 2014, p.151. See also: Donald M. Nicol. *The Despotate of Epiros 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.5.

the Bulgarian king. Still, Bulgaria annexed almost the entire territory of Epirus. This was a crippling blow to the young statelet and the very presence of the despotate on the map of Europe became debatable.

Evidence for the disintegration of Epirus is supported by a recent archaeological find that revealed a coin minted by Manuel Komnenos Doukas, ruler of Thessaloniki and brother of Theodore, on which he is shown being crowned by Ivan Asen.⁸⁴ Once this coin became known to the public, five more such coins surfaced in the vaults of Bulgarian museums in the cities of Veliko Tarnovo (Tranovgrad) and Kardjali that had thus far been mislabeled as Byzantine. These coins have not yet been publicly displayed, but the most eminent Bulgarian numismatists are convinced of their authenticity and exceptional significance.⁸⁵ It is no small matter that Manuel had married the daughter of Ivan Asen II sometime around 1225-1227. Konstantinos Varzos and John Van Antwerp Fine correctly suggest that the power of Manuel Komnenos was limited to the borders of Thessaloniki itself, and for all intents and purposes he was forced to seek approval for his actions from the Bulgarian king.⁸⁶ The discovery of these coins is impressive evidence to support this conclusion.

There is even more evidence that the capitol of Epirus, Thessaloniki, was under the effective rule of the Bulgarian king hidden in Orthodox-Slavonic written sources. Ivan Asen concluded a trade agreement with Dubrovnik and issued in 1230 a special royal warrant granting trade privileges to the Dubrovnik merchants, mentioning more than once that each territory listed therein, including Thessaloniki, constituted an integral part of his empire. This is the same year when he defeated and captured Theodore Komnenus. The document reads:

My Kingdom grants this leave and privilege to the Dubrovnik party, to the beloved and faithful guests of my Kingdom, to travel the width and breadth of my Kingdom laden with any goods of their choice, to move in or out, or across my Kingdom any merchandise they deem appropriate, and to arrive at any land or destination: at Bdin or Branichevo or Belgrade; or to proceed to Tarnovo or all of Zagore territory, or go as far afield as Preslav or Karvun territory,

⁸⁴ 'Уникална монета прекроява историята: Солун е бил част от България!', 16.05.2016, www.bgnes.com. [Unique coin changes the history: Thessaloniki used to be part from Bulgaria!'. www.bgnes.com. Retrieved from: <http://novini.rozali.com/bulgaria/unikalna-moneta-prekroiava-istoriata-solun-e-bil-chast-ot-bulgaria.html>. (Accessed 12.05.2018)

⁸⁵ Ivan Dikov. 'Coin indicates Second Bulgarian Empire gained control over Thessaloniki (Salonica) in mid 13th century. Collector-Archaeologists hypothesize'. 19.05.2016. archaeologyinbulgaria.com. Retrieved from: <http://archaeologyinbulgaria.com/2016/05/19/coin-indicates-second-bulgarian-empire-gained-control-over-thessaloniki-salonica-in-mid-13th-century-collector-archaeologists-hypothesize/>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

⁸⁶ Konstantinos Varzos. *Η Γενεαλογία των Κομνηνών* [The Genealogy of the Komnenoi] (in Greek). *Byzantine text and studies*, I.E. Karayannopoulos (ed.) Thessaloniki: Centre for Byzantine Studies, Thessaloniki, 1984, p. 639–642; See also: John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*. 1994, p. 126.

or to Kran territory, or to Boruy territory, or to Adrianople or Dimotika, or to Skopje or Prilep territories, or to Devol territory, or to Arban Land [Albania] or to Solun: to be free to buy and sell everywhere, and be held harmless and made able, without let or hindrance in any and all territories of my Kingdom, to buy and sell without concern, as loyal and beloved guests of my Kingdom. And whoever gives them any grief by any means, whether in the ravines or in the market place, or does anything to them against the laws of fair trade, then he shall be branded an enemy of my Kingdom and there shall be no mercy for him but the mighty wrath of my Kingdom shall befall him.

† ASEN KING OF BULGARIANS AND HELLENES †⁸⁷

We can hardly believe that Ivan Asen would include Thessaloniki in a document of this type if he did not actually control the city. Such an action would make this the royal warrant appear illegitimate. As we can see from the privileges granted to the merchants of Dubrovnik, they were valuable guests in the Bulgarian kingdom including in the city of ‘Solun’ (Thessaloniki). This is just one example of the results that we can achieve by merging archaeological data with written sources. The fact that Thessaloniki, the second largest city in the Byzantine and consequent Latin Empire was in the hands of the Bulgarians had not been proven previously. But these coins naming Ivan Asen II and his son in law Manuel together and the treaty with Dubrovnik where Thessaloniki is named a Bulgarian city are convincing evidence (Figure 6 and Figure 7).

⁸⁷ Ангелина Даскалова, Мария Райкова. *Грамоти на българските царе*. АИ “Проф. Марин Дринов”, София, 2005, с. 30. [Angelina Daskalova, Maria Raikova. *Bulgarian king's diplomas*. Academic Publishing House Proff. Marin Drinov, Sofia, 2005, p.30.]

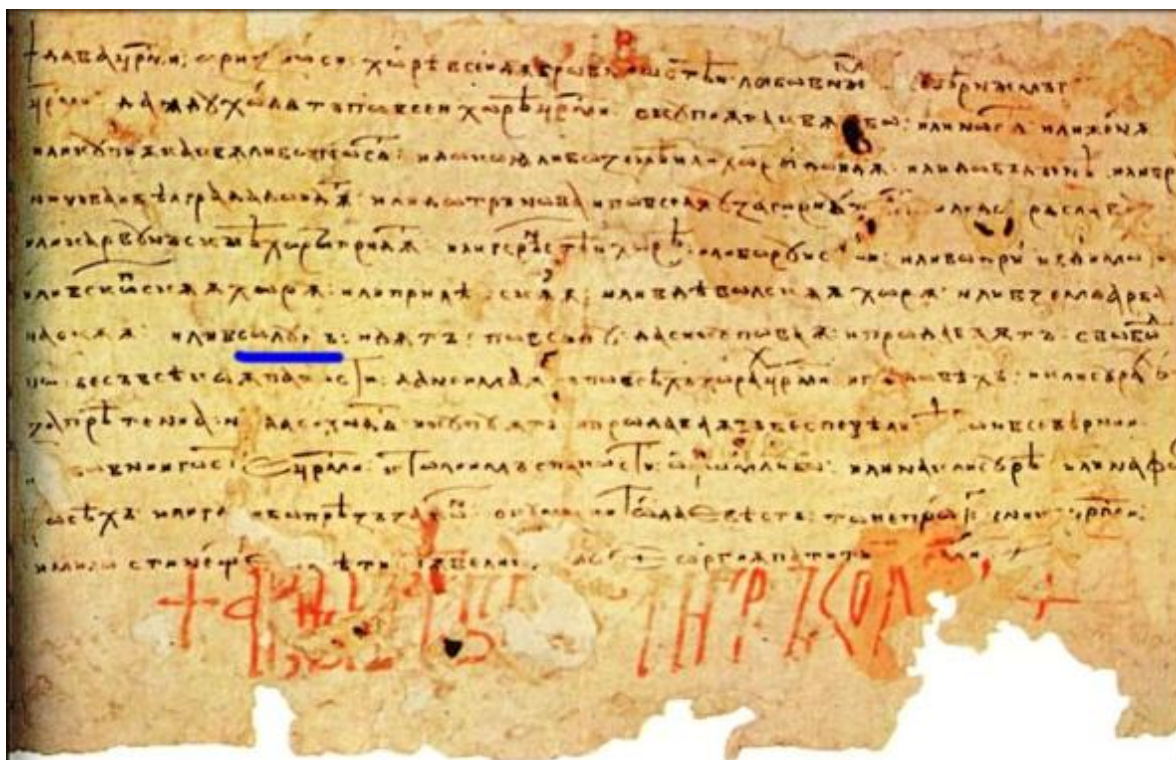


Figure 6. Trade agreement with Dubrovnik issued 1230 and signed by the Bulgarian king Ivan Asen II. The name 'Solun' is underlined with blue. Image: Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Displayed at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Size 240x143mm. Inventory number 4.5.5.

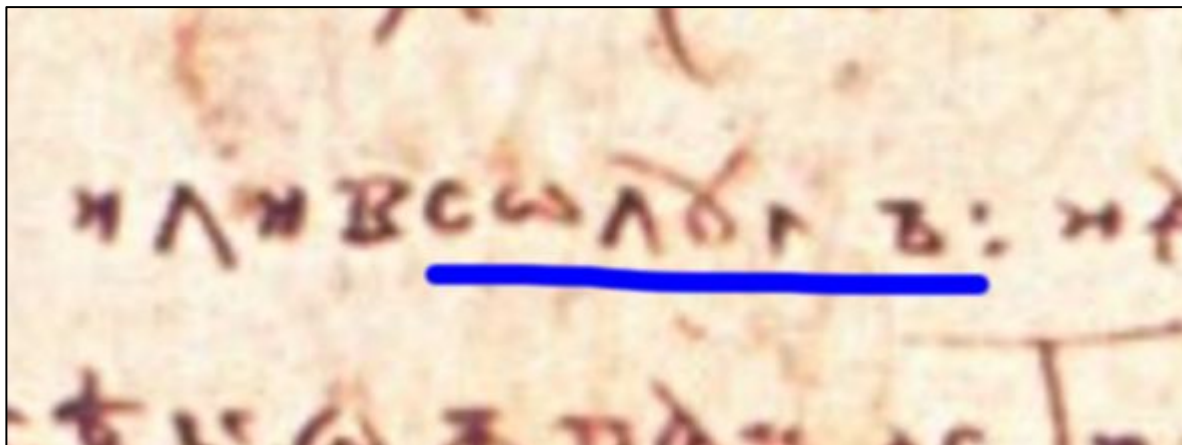


Figure 7. Detail of the trade agreement with Dubrovnik, showing the name of 'Solun', underlined with blue.

Following the disastrous defeat suffered at Klokotnitza by Theodore Komnenos, and his subsequent blinding at the hands of Ivan Asen II, it was abundantly clear to Manuel that the fate of the second largest city in the former Byzantine Empire Thessaloniki was at the mercy of the Bulgarian king. The vassal status of Thessaloniki was beyond doubt and, judging by the act of coronation depicted on these coins, the annexation of this city by Bulgaria was a *fait accompli*. This does not conflict with written sources or what is known regarding the fate

of Epirus after 1230, namely that the statelet was virtually wiped off the map. By coincidence, Ivan Asen and Manuel Komnenos Doukas died in the same year: 1241. Five years later, in 1246, Thessaloniki fell into the hands of the Nicaean emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes.⁸⁸ Epirus never regained its former power. One of the key players with an appetite for the throne of the Latin Empire, Epirus was removed from the race to Constantinople and the reason for this was not the Latins, but ongoing rivalry with two Orthodox kingdoms.

The Empire of Nicaea

The elimination of Epirus had the effect of setting the scene for the fight over the Byzantine legacy. The remaining contestants were Bulgaria, Nicaea, and Trebizond. The relations between Nicaea and Bulgaria, at times warm, at times settled on the battlefield, were always overshadowed by their parallel goals of conquering Constantinople, which retained symbolic and strategic significance for them. But was religion the unifying factor in their relations or did they simply follow the diplomatic courses set out by Ivan Asen II and John III Doukas Vatatzes?

By making guarded use of the legacy of Kaloyan, namely, the union with the Catholic Church that had aligned Bulgaria with Catholicism, Ivan Asen II tried to take advantage of his good relations with the Papacy to gain the trust and confidence of the Latin Empire in order to achieve his aim of being appointed regent of the eleven-year-old Baldwin II, who became emperor in 1228. These schemes were thwarted a year later by the signing of the Treaty of Perugia, approved by Pope Gregory IX on 9 April 1229, in which John of Brienne was awarded the regency of the throne of Constantinople.⁸⁹ This treaty was deliberately kept secret until around 1231 to ensure a smooth transition without unnecessarily provoking the Bulgarian king.⁹⁰ Apparently, Bulgaria's credibility with the Papacy proved insufficient for the young Baldwin II to be placed under the guardianship of Ivan Asen. Thus, Bulgaria was snubbed in favour of the former king of Jerusalem, which was a brilliant and thoroughly-reasoned decision by Gregory IX. In a certain way, however, this was also a decision that led to the demise of the Latin Empire since it prompted an alliance between Bulgaria and Nicaea that led to a siege of

⁸⁸ John Haldon. *The Palgrave Atlas of Byzantine History*. Palgrave, New York, 2005, p. 124. See also: Eugenia Russel. *Literature and Culture in Late Byzantine Thessalonica*. Bloomsbury, London and New York, 2013, p. 29.

⁸⁹ Gualterii Cornuti, senonensis archiepiscopi. 'Historia susceptionis Corone Spinee'. *Exuviae Sacrae Constantinopolitani*. Volume 1, Genova, 1877, p.48 ;See also : Guy Perry. *John of Brienne: King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c.1175-1237*. Cambridge University Press, 2013, p.151.

⁹⁰ John Van Antwerp Fine. *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*, 1994, p. 126. Fine says: 'To have kept Perugia secret would have been sensible policy of the Latins' part, to prevent Asen from cooperating with Theodore.'

Constantinople and the return of Bulgaria Orthodoxy. Clearly, the confidence and trust established by Pope Innocent III was no longer a priority for his successors. Of course it would be hard for anyone to emulate the level of diplomatic genius reached by Innocent III; it was that inability of his successors to operate at his level that caused the inevitable decline in relations between papal legate and Orthodoxy.

By 1231, relations between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire were strained, prompting the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Asen to reinforce his southern border. A new fortress was built at Stenimachos [Stanimak] (Asenovgrad today), as can be seen from a stone inscription found at the site,:

‘В(ѣ) ДѢ(ТО) С П Д Θ ЄН(ДИ)К(ТЯ) Д Б(ОГ)У(Дѣ)
ВЪЗДВИЖЕНЫ ЦР(ѣ) АСѢНЬ БЛ҃ГЯРОМѢ И ГР҃КОМѢ ТЯЖЕ И
ПРОЧИМѢ СТ҃ЯНИМѢ ПОСТАВИ АЛЕКСѢ СЕВЯСТІ И СІЗДА СЕИ
Г҃РАДѢ

Which, translated from Old Bulgarian, reads:

In the year 6737 from the Creation [1231], indiction 4, the God-ordained Tsar Asen of Bulgarians and Greeks, and also of other countries, appointed Alexius sebastos and built this fortress here.⁹¹

There are no other records for Alexius and it is not known who he was. According to his title ‘sebastos’ he was probably a close boyar to Ivan Asen II.⁹² Worthy of note is the fact that, after the crushing defeat inflicted upon Epirus, Nicaea vigorously sought to establish contact with Bulgaria for the purpose of forming a unified front against the Latin Empire. As Louis Brehier notes: ‘Ivan Asen laboured much more for Nicaea than for Constantinople, where the Emperor, Robert, who had left for the West in 1228 to try to organise a crusade, died on his return’.⁹³ Similarly, the foreign policy of Nicaea was geared towards bringing Bulgaria back to Orthodoxy.

⁹¹ ‘Ivan Asen II stone monument with inscription from *Stenimachos*.’ Петър Коледаров, *Политическа география на средновековната Българска държава. II част (1186-1396)*, Българска Академия на Науките, София, 1989, стр. 9; [Petar Koledarov, *Political geography of medieval Bulgarian state (1186-1396)*, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, 1989, page. 9]. My English translation. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/pk2/pk2_1.htm. (Accessed 23.04.2018).

⁹² (Σεβαστός/*Sebastós*). Originally a Greek equivalent for the Latin title *Augustus*, was not introduced as a title in the Byzantine court until the 11th century AD; after 1081 it was conferred - also in combinations such as *sebastokrátōr* - by the Comnenian emperors predominantly on family members. Sourced from: Franz Tinnefeld. ‘*Sebastos*. *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity volumes edited by: Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider. English Edition by: Christine F. Salazar. Classical Tradition volumes edited by: Manfred Landfester. English Edition by: Francis G. Gentry. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e1106200. (Accessed 23.04.2018).

⁹³ Louis Brehier. *The life and death of Byzantium*. North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam 1977, p. 264.

The re-conversion of Bulgaria was a two-way process. In a letter to Ivan Asen, dated to 1233, the exarch of the Western Territories, Christoforos of Ankira, writes:

You came along as a true son of the Holy Universal and Apostolic Church, you joined together in a good way what had once been torn asunder, and established the Orthodox cause in Zagore (Bulgaria), something that none of your predecessors had managed to achieve. And therefore God elevated you and glorified you and gave you a reward worthy of your faith. You can see the fruits that the roots of piety and virtue have borne. You can see to what greatness a road of piety and virtue will lead him who follows it. Therefore, keep following that road in perpetuity.⁹⁴

Although published in the now distant year 1885, the source is a very important reference document. It shows that even before the official break with the Papacy in 1235, the Bulgarian king had been preparing for the act. Christoforos of Ankira was appointed by the Nicaean patriarch Germanus II Nauplius (1223-1240) to look after the European Orthodox population while the patriarch focussed on Asia Minor.⁹⁵ Germanus II was eager to bring Orthodox Christians under his authority. He successfully added the church of Epirus in 1232, after the state had been defeated at Klokotnitza in 1230.⁹⁶ The efforts to convert Bulgaria, meanwhile, were mutual and in line with the logical process of rapprochement between Bulgaria and Nicaea, which began with the marriage of Ivan Asen's daughter to John III Doukas Vatatzes of Nicaea. Finally, in 1235 the Bulgarian Church declared its independence and the bishop of Tarnovgrad, Joachim, was proclaimed patriarch of Bulgaria. The joint campaigns against the Latin Empire that followed these events caused a dramatic reduction to its territory, not even counting the heavy siege of Constantinople that, granted, did not result in conquest but was indicative of the long-term plans of this Orthodox alliance.

⁹⁴ Christoforos of Ankira. 'Letter to Ivan Asen II, from 1233.' Василий Василевский "Обновление болгарского патриаршества при царе Иоанне Асене II в 1235 году". В.С.Балашева (ред.). *Журнале Министерство Народногo Посвещения*. т.238, Типография, С.Петербургъ, 1885, стр.53-55. [Vasili Vasilevskii. 'Renewal of Bulgarian patriarchate with tzar Ivan Asen II in 1235'. *Journal of Ministry of people's education*. vol. 238, Typography, St.Petersburg, 1885, pp. 53-55]. My English translation. Original Greek text (Greek-Russian bi-lingua) available at: http://www.byzantium.ru/library/vasiljevskij_obnovlenie_patriarshestva.pdf. (Accessed 23.04.2018).

⁹⁵ Петър Ников. 'Църковната политика на Ивана Асеня II'. *Българска Историческа Библиотека*. т. III, София, 1930, с. 84-85. [Petar Nikov. 'The Church politics of Ivan Asen II'. *Bulgarian Historical Library*. Volume III, Sofia, 1930, p.84-85].

⁹⁶ Michael Angold 'Byzantium in exile'. David Abulafia (ed.). *The New Cambridge Medieval History*. Volume V, c. 1198–c. 1300, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, pp.551-552.

No such intensive contacts have ever been recorded between Nicaea and Trebizond. Although the bitterness and frustration with the loss of Constantinople was a common sentiment for all Greeks, it did not in any way form the basis for any shared policy or concerted action. Quite the contrary, in fact. From Nikéas Choniates, we learn about several military campaigns launched jointly by the Empire of Trebizond and the Latin Emperor Henry of Flanders against Nicaea between 1204 and 1206.⁹⁷

Bulgaria was a preferred ally despite bitter memories of centuries-old wars. For John III Doukas Vatatzes of Nicaea, the alliance with Bulgaria was to some extent a gamble. Following 1230, Bulgaria had more than doubled its territory and was a formidable power in its own right, quite capable of conquering Constantinople by itself. Skilfully offering it the incentive of religious autonomy, John chose the lesser evil, working the religious levers that controlled this alliance while taking the fullest possible advantage of its military might. For his part, Ivan Asen II changed his official title and began sealing official documents as ‘Tsar of Bulgarians and Greeks’.⁹⁸ This represents the reality, as the enormous territory of Bulgaria at the time was home to Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbians, as well as smaller communities. Such a mixed ethnic composition gave the population a cosmopolitan air while stoking Ivan Asen’s desire to project himself as the monarch of all his subjects. We should have no doubt that the inclusion of ‘Greeks’ in his title was not enthusiastically received by the heirs to the Byzantine Empire, although there was very little they could do to stop him from using it.

Ivan Asen II was at the peak of his glory, yet he never let that glory go to his head. In the edict reinstating the Orthodox Bulgarian Patriarchate, Ivan Asen deliberately omitted the ethnonym ‘Greek’ from his seal. This is what we read in *King Boril’s Synodicon*, an ambitious running chronicle that was not finished until centuries later. Since the *Synodicon* mentions both Ivan Asen and Patriarch Euthymius as already dead [Euthymius died around 1403], one may assume that this specific edition dates shortly after 1403. It is important to note that this is a later addition of the original text, which was written in 1211 in conjunction with the council of Boril against the Bogomils in 1211. The events described in the *Synodicon* are extremely accurate when cross-referenced with other sources; therefore, they are trustworthy. The narrative recreates the moment of Bulgaria’s return into the fold of the Orthodox faith and the historic meeting between the two monarchs, accompanied by their highest clerics. In this text,

⁹⁷ *O City of Byzantium. Annals of Niketas Choniates*. Translated by Harry J. Magoulias, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1984, pp 335-337.

⁹⁸ Иван Дуйчев. *Приноси към историята на Иван Асен II*, Българското средновековие. София, 1971, стр. 296-299. [Ivan Duychev, *Contributions to the history of Ivan Asen II*. Bulgarian Middle Ages, Sofia, 1971, page 296-299].

Ivan Asen is described as the ‘tsar of the Bulgarians’, which is undoubtedly due to the fact that he is mentioned together with John of Nicaea, who is titled ‘tsar of the Greeks’:

When the Greek Tsar, together with the Patriarch, received this [letter of invitation], he summoned from all over his Kingdom the metropolitan bishops, the archbishops, the bishops and the all-pious monks, the archimandrites and the abbots. Likewise, the Christ-loving Tsar Ivan Asen of the Bulgarians [summoned] from all over his kingdom the metropolitan bishops, the archbishops, the bishops and the devout monks of Mount Athos. They gathered together with the Eastern Tsar of Kaloianis [John the Handsome, i.e. John III Doukas Vatatzes] on the Pontic Sea and proclaimed Patriarch that most reverential and holiest of men, famed for his penitence and piety, the pre-ordained Bishop Joachim, not only orally but in writing by Patriarch Germanus, to which all the Eastern bishops set their hand and seal, then gave it to the pious King and the then newly ordained Patriarch, Joachim, for memory eternal and everlasting. Now therefore we inscribed these facts for all Orthodox brethren, so be they known to those who listen and so be they remembered by the Bulgarian people. Eternal memory to that great and pious Ivan Asen II, Tsar of all Bulgarians!⁹⁹

Much in the spirit of the document, the anonymous Bulgarian author has presented, with subtle diplomatic flair, the two monarchs negotiating with each other on an equal footing. Perhaps out of respect for Nicaea and its Byzantine tradition, which John claims to represent, the Nicaean emperor is referred throughout the text as the ‘Eastern Tsar’. This event marked a turning point in the history of southeastern Europe and the Balkans in the first half of the thirteenth century. Partitioned, Byzantium was in no position to form a coalition against the Latin Empire and, by all appearances, was not even trying to. For its part, Bulgaria was lured back into the Orthodox camp by the skilful diplomacy of John of Nicaea.

These negotiations were crowned with success in 1235 when the two rulers signed an agreement in the city of Lampsacus that was sealed with the marriage of Elena, daughter of Ivan Asen, to Theodore Lascaris, John’s son.¹⁰⁰ The accord provided for full independence of

⁹⁹ ‘Синодик на цар Борил’. *Държава и църква през XIII век: Преписка на българите с папа Инокентий III, Синодик на цар Борил*. Емил Димитров (ред.). Славянска библиотека. Серия Slavia Orthodoxa, София, 1999, с. 105. [‘King Boril’s Synodicon’. *State and church during 13th century: Bulgarian correspondence with Innocent III, Synodicon of tsar Boril*. Emil Dimitrov (ed.). Slavic library. Series Slavia Orthodoxa, Sofia, 1999, p.105.]. Full digital facsimile of the original Synodic: <http://digital.nationallibrary.bg/DWebClient/IntegrationViewer.aspx?DWSubSession=7632&v=1796>. (Accessed 23.04.2018).

¹⁰⁰ *George Akropolites: The History*. Ruth Macrides (trans). Oxford University Press, 2007, p.39. See also: Dimiter G. Angelov. ‘Theodore II Laskaris, Elena Asenina and Bulgaria’. Angel Nikolov, George Nikolov (eds.). *The Medieval Bulgarian and the others’ Corpus in honour of 60th anniversary of prof. Petar Angelov*. University of Sofia press, Sofia, 2013, pp.273-293. Ангел Николов, Георги Николов (ред.). *Средновековният българин и другите: сборник в чест на 60-годишнината на проф. дин Петър Ангелов*, Университетско Издателство “Климент Охридски”, 2013, стр.273-293.

the Bulgarian church, whose supreme cleric, the archbishop of Tarnovgrad, Joachim, was proclaimed patriarch.¹⁰¹ Thus the Bulgarian patriarchate, destroyed by Byzantine Emperor Basil II, was restored, which amounted to a final renunciation of the 1204 union with the Roman Curia. The treaty also established that both kingdoms would fight the Latins until they were completely driven out of Thrace.¹⁰² This provision was implemented that same year, when Bulgarian and Nicaean troops attacked and captured eastern Thrace, which was subsequently partitioned between the allies. The Nicaeans received the Gallipoli Peninsula with the city of Miletus, a number of other cities on the north-western shores of the Sea of Marmara, as well as the fortress of Kissos. The border between Nicaea and the Bulgarians in Thrace reached the river Maritza in the west and the fortress of Tzurulon in the east. The Bulgarians received the areas lying to the north, including large portions of eastern and southern Thrace and the lands around the city of Plovdiv, which had been annexed by the Bulgarian kingdom since the battle of Klokotnitza.

Having split between themselves the spoils of war, the allied armies marched on Constantinople. As John Langdon describes, John Vatazes and Ivan Asen's plan to capture Constantinople consisted carefully coordinated attacks by land and sea. Ivan Asen was the first Bulgarian king ever to build his own navy on the Black Sea, building battleships to support the siege. The Latin capital was in grave danger and Latin Emperor Baldwin II left for France to seek help, leaving John of Brienne in charge of the capital's defences. The siege was unsuccessful and was lifted after a few months due to the onset of winter. The Bulgarian-Nicaean coalition frightened all neighbouring countries. However, relations within it were not a paragon of sincerity. While those in Bulgaria still debated the merits of Catholicism and Orthodoxy, Ivan Asen II was too powerful to be punished for his duplicitous policies. Thus, for example, he allowed a 60,000 strong army led by Baldwin to cross Bulgarian territory in 1239 despite the displeasure this caused Nicaea.¹⁰³ Attempts to intervene and capture the Latin Emperor failed and the army successfully strengthened Constantinople. In all likelihood, though, the Empire of Nicaea benefitted more from this alliance, since, by bringing Bulgaria back to the Orthodox Church, Bulgaria was deprived of any opportunity to make diplomatic

¹⁰¹ Kiril Petkov. *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century: The voices of bygone Culture*. Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2008, pp.285-286.

¹⁰² John S. Langdon. 'The Forgotten Byzantino-Bulgarian Assault and Siege of Constantinople, 1235–1236, and the Break-up of the Entente Cordiale between John III Ducas Vatazes and John Asen II as a Background to the Genesis of the Hohenstaufen-Vatazes Alliance of 1242.' S. Vryonis Jr. (ed.). *Byzantinakai Metabyzantina*, 4, 1985, (Byzantine Studies in Honor of Milton V. Anastos), p.105–135.

¹⁰³ Alexandru Madgearu. *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire, 1185–1280*. Brill, 2017, p.223.

inroads into Constantinople and partake in its governance while it remained under Catholic control. This was Ivan Asen's ultimate goal, II who realised that it was not the battering ram but the quill that would open the gates of Constantinople for him. This, however, never happened and, after his death in 1241, his heir lacked the qualities necessary to pursue and realise these goals.

Although control of Constantinople remained their main goal, the Orthodox countries still fought against one another. No such thing as a multinational coalition against the Latin Empire was even close to existence. Rather, the agenda of each separate Orthodox state was, first, crush its neighbours, then consolidate the resources of the seized territories, and only afterwards proceed to Constantinople.

In 1244, the Nicaean emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes married a bastard daughter of the German emperor Frederick II.¹⁰⁴ This shows the confidence of Nicaea on the field of world diplomacy by this time. Gradually it becomes clear that Nicaea was the only determinant and constant pretender to the throne of Constantinople. By that time Bulgaria was no longer a key player. In 1247, the Bulgarian king Mihail Asen was cornered by John III, who managed to capture with minimum effort the Bulgarian fortress of Melnik and expand his offensive into modern-day Macedonia, where he conquered Stob, Velbuzhd (today's city of Kyustendil), Skopje, Veles, Prilep, Ovche Pole, and Prosek.¹⁰⁵ Without encountering more than the most basic resistance, he also seized Stenimachos, Tzepina, and other population centres in the Rhodope Mountains. His ultimate goal was Thessaloniki, where Mikhail Asen's uncle, John Komnenos, ruled. By pushing Bulgaria out of the Aegean, the Nicaean emperor sought to preempt a potential Bulgarian campaign to rescue John Komnenos. Following the successful campaign, the emperor proposed and signed a peace treaty with the Bulgarians, promising not to advance any further into their territories. The river Maritza became the boundary between the two states. Thus, a mere five years after Ivan Asen's death, his unprecedented territorial expansion was completely reversed with little resistance in a manner of weeks. The Nicaeans went so far as to seize control of Thessaloniki, a city that had previously been a vassal to Ivan Asen.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Georgii Pachymeris. *De Michaelis et Andronico palaeologis libri tredecim*. Immanuel Bekker (ed.) Volumen Prius. Impensis Ed. Weberi, Bonae, 1835. (Greek-Latin bi-lingua). [‘Ante omnia memorandum est quid de Anna Alamana tentaverit fuerat haec exiguo tempore coniux Ioannis Augusti, patris Theodori Lascaris ab eo ducta in externo senio, Frederici Siciliae regis filla Manfredi soror...’], p. 181. Full digital copy: https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=x9QFAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=bg&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false (Accessed 24.04.2018)

¹⁰⁵ Warren T. Treadgold. *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997, p.728

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.728.

The Bulgarians, however, did not sit idly by. They awaited the right moment to go on the offensive and regain their lost territories. The problem was that none of the kings that ascended the Bulgarian throne after Ivan Asen II possessed the necessary military prowess or diplomatic skills to succeed. Thus, following the death of John of Nicaea on 3 November 1254, the Bulgarians crossed the border and captured the fortresses of Stenimachos, Perushtitza, Krichim, Tzepina, and the area of Ahrida in the Rhodope Mountains. The new Nicaean emperor, Theodore II Lascaris, had been busy transferring troops from Asia Minor into the Balkans and managed to catch Mihail Asen by surprise. Instead of fighting him, the young king fled.¹⁰⁷ Bulgaria was no longer the military force it had been twenty years earlier. The Franciscan friar William of Rubruck, who spent two years (1253-1255) in the Mongol Empire, while describing his journey listed Mihail Asen's realms—'Blakia—Assan's territory—and Little Bulgaria'¹⁰⁸—and described him as 'a mere lad whose power has been eroded by the Mongols'.¹⁰⁹ The shrewd diplomatic actions of John III during his long, 32-year reign (1222-1254), provided Nicaea with the resources and advantage that enabled it to recapture Constantinople only seven years after his death. The fact remains, though, that the erstwhile allies Bulgaria and Nicaea opted for another round of warfare in close proximity to the Latin Empire, rather than to pursue common goals as they had done prior to 1235.

The Empire of Trebizond

The Empire of Trebizond formed as a result of a rebellion that had broken out in protest against dynastic squabbles in the capital mere weeks before its fall to the crusaders in 1204.¹¹⁰ Information about Trebizond in written sources is limited – the only historian that wrote about the empire was Michael Panaretos, (1320-1390) who, writing more than a century later, describes the foundation of the empire in his *Chronicle of Trebizond*.¹¹¹ The first emperor of Trebizond was Alexius I Megas Komnenos, son of Sebastokrator Manuel Komnenos and grandson of Andronikos I Komnenos (1183-1185), the last Byzantine Emperor of the

¹⁰⁷ Alexandru Madgearu. *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire, 1185–1280*. Brill, 2017, p.242.

¹⁰⁸ *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His journey to the court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255*. Peter Jackson(trans.). Introduction, notes, and appendices by Peter Jackson and David Morgan. Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 2009, p.66.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

¹¹⁰ Alexander A. Vasiliev. 'The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond 1204-1222'. *Medieval Academy of America, Speculum 11*, vol.1, 1936, pp.3-37.

¹¹¹ Michail Panaretos. 'Chronicle of Trabezund'. Sp. P. Lambros (ed.). NE, IV, 1901, pp.266-294; Michael. Paneratos, 'Peri ton Megalon Komnenon'. O. Lampsides (ed.). *Archeion*, Pontou 22, Athens, 1958, 61–81.

Komnenos dynasty who was deposed in 1185 by Isaac II Angelos. Even before the conquest of Constantinople by crusaders, Alexis, with the help of a Georgian army provided by his aunt, Queen Tamara of Georgia, conquered Trebizond and the surrounding territory.¹¹² His successes were due in no small measure to the fact that the Komnenos lineage had its roots there and was well loved by the local population. This, however, did not spare Trebizond from trouble with the other Byzantine statelets. In the words of Michael Angold:

The most remote was centred on the city of Trebizond, where Alexios and David Komnenos, grandsons of the tyrant Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–5), established themselves early in 1204. David then pushed westwards to secure control of Paphlagonia, which had been held by his grandfather. This brought him into conflict with Theodore Laskaris, who was organising resistance to the Latins from Nicaea.¹¹³

The claims of the emperors of Trebizond to the Byzantine throne were no less legitimate than those of the rulers of Nicaea, the difference being that the Trebizondians were not as hell-bent on conquering Constantinople as the means to establishing their legitimacy. They had carefully weighed the pros and cons of such a venture and decided against it. Nonetheless, they managed to retain their empire even after Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. Their policy *vis-a-vis* the Latin Empire was even more flexible. As early as 1206, they became vassals of Henry of Flanders, the Latin Emperor, thus securing for themselves a much-needed breather for the consolidation of their young state. Having opted for peaceful co-existence rather than direct confrontation with the Latin Empire, the emperors of Trebizond navigated a tricky course between Latins, Seljuk Turks, and Mongols. Commercially very active, the state traded and mediated between the Italian city-states of Genoa and Venice, and the Near and Middle East, as well as further afield.¹¹⁴ For all intents and purposes, Trebizond was similar to an Italian-style city-state, only it was located on the Black sea. In the words of Robert Hewsen: ‘The common view is that the Empire of Trebizond relied heavily upon wealth gained from its

¹¹² Alexander A. Vasiliev. *The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond 1204-1222*. 1936, pp.16-17. [‘Michael Panaretos, a special ‘historian’ of Trebizond notes that Alexius Comnenus, ‘marching from Iberia supported by the zeal and efficient help of his paternal aunt, Tamar, took possession of Trebizond.’]. Original source quoted by Vasilev: Michael Panaretos, ed. S. Lambros, p. 266

¹¹³ Michael Angold. ‘After the Fourth Crusade: The Greek rump states and the recovery of Byzantium’. Jonathan Shepard (ed.). *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008, pp. 731-732.

¹¹⁴ Robert H. Hewsen. ‘Armenians on the Black Sea: The Province of Trebizond’. Richard G. Hovhannesian(ed.). *Armenian Pontus: The Trebizond-Black Sea Communities*. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers Inc., 2009, pp. 37-66 (47).

trade with Genoese and Venetian merchants to secure for itself the resources necessary to maintain independence'.¹¹⁵ In 1282, Trebizond made an alliance with the restored Byzantine Empire, whereby the exarchate of Trebizond recognised the supremacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch and sealed this treaty with the marriage of Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos's sister, Eudokia Palaiologina to the Trebizond emperor John II Megas Komnenos.¹¹⁶ At the cost of religious concessions and diplomatic adeptness, the emperors of Trebizond legitimised and keep their empire until 1461.

The silent reconciliation in Constantinople

There was yet another factor that tends to be overlooked by most researchers: the local population of Constantinople and the surrounding area. The Latin Empire may have been a state with a Catholic government and an Orthodox population, but it was a single state nonetheless. During this period the city's population could have easily numbered between 200,000 and 250,000 before the Fourth Crusade. In his unique study of the social development of civilisations, Ian Morris defends such an assumption on the basis of statistical, historical, and economic indicators.¹¹⁷ Similar numbers have been presented in several other studies, as well.¹¹⁸ If we assume that the Orthodox population of Constantinople and the surrounding towns numbered around 200,000-250,000 during the Latin Empire, there remains the peculiar fact that they never rose in rebellion against the Latin knights usurping the palaces of their great emperors. After all, we are talking about no more than 500 to 800 heavily armed knights, who, together with their squires and the ancillary troops, could hardly have numbered more than 15,000. If we add to this the population of the Venetian and Genovese merchant districts, the total number of non-Orthodox residents could hardly have exceeded 25,000, approximately one-tenth of the indigenous population. In fact, these figures are supported by Geoffrey of Villehardouin himself, who writes about the consequences of the first fire in Constantinople, which occurred before the city was captured in the Fourth Crusade:

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 48.

¹¹⁶ William Miller. *Trebizond: The last Greek Empire of the Byzantine Era: 1204-1461*. Argonaut Publishing, Chocago, 1969, p. 29.

¹¹⁷ Ian Morris. *Social Development*. A free eBook detailing the Social Development Index used in 'Why the West Rules—For Now', Stanford University, 2010, p.112. Retrived from: <http://www.ianmorris.org/docs/social-development.pdf> (Accessed 17.06.2016).

¹¹⁸ Timothy E. Gregory. *A History of Byzantium*. Wiley-Blackwell, Singapoure, 2010, p. 309. See also: Robert Fossier (ed.), *Cambridge Illustrated History of Middle Ages: 950-1250*.Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, pp.506-508.

None of the Latins who had been resident inside Constantinople, no matter where they came from, dared stay in the city no longer. And so they gathered up their wives and children and whatever they had been able to bring out of the fire and they boarded boats and ships to cross the harbour to where the pilgrims were. The numbers were not trifling; there were at least 15,000 people of both higher and lower condition who, in the wake of their crossing, would prove to be of great use to the pilgrims.¹¹⁹

We also have the testimony of the contemporary Muslim chronicler Ibn al- Athir (1160-1232). In his 'Universal History' he states: 'A large contingent of nearly 30,000 Franks was then [1204] living in Constantinople, but due to the vast size of the city, their number had no influence'.¹²⁰ According to Thomas Madden, Constantinople had a population of 35,000 inhabitants when it was conquered by the Niceaens in 1261.¹²¹ Even supposing that the inhabitants of Constantinople fled in droves after the fall of their city, Madden's estimate seems unrealistically low. Given all the written sources and data presented above, Madden's 35 000 seems wildly understated. We have estimated 250 000 – 300 000 inhabitants of Constantinople given by scholars as Ian Morris and Timothy E. Gregory cited above. Moreover, if Villehardouin and al-Athir tell us that the Westerners in Constantinople were around 15,000-30,000 in 1204 and their number had no influence, then Madden's assumption that the total population was 35,000 in 1261 is not justified. We can even assume that during the Latin rule (1204-1261) the number of the Westerners will grow due to pilgrims, settlers and military personnel. That means that the number of Westerners given by Villehardouin and al-Athir for 1204 will be even more in 1261.

This picture and the numbers estimated by Madden leaves no room for the local Orthodox citizens. This is not supported by any historical evidence and there are no records for such a development. Moreover, if we accept the much more realistic number of 250, 000 inhabitants of Constantinople, backed by the scholars and the written sources, there is no evidence for internal wars, riots or epidemics that might cause Constantinople to shrink from 250,000 to 35,000 (and almost all Westerners) people between 1204 and 1261. Considering that the knights were frequently capturing the lands of the erstwhile Byzantine Empire, the permanent

¹¹⁹ Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*. Translated and edited by Caroline Smith, Penguin books, London 2008, page 55.

¹²⁰ Taef El-Azhari. *Muslim Chroniclers and the Fourth Crusade*. Benjamin Kedar, Jonathan Riley-Smith and Jonathan Phillips (eds.) *Crusades*, vol. 6, Ashgate, Cornwall, 2007, pp.107-116

¹²¹ Thomas Madden. *Crusades: The Illustrated History*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2005, p. 113.

garrison stationed in Constantinople could hardly have been more than 150 knights and several thousand servants and personnel. The rest were merchants, pilgrims and settlers. So what was it that stopped the local Orthodox population of at least 150, 000 from rebelling and throwing out those who had put their city to the sword and subjected it to unprecedented atrocities, plunder, and marauding? Even after the papal legate Pelagius shut down Orthodox churches and persecuted Greek monks for refusing to recognise the papal primacy in 1214, still this silent majority remained silent.¹²²

Why was this fourth element, Greek in its essence, so blissfully passive, given the fact that in the history of the Byzantine Empire there is so many revolts? The list of the riots and civil wars in the Byzantine Empire counts indicates more than hundred revolts between the fifth and thirteen century and between the years 458 and 1197 there were thirteen tax revolts on the territory of Byzantine Empire.¹²³ In most of these cases the peasants rebelled against their own emperors. But this is not the case in the capitol of the Latin Empire, Constantinople. Frustrated, the Nicaean patriarch Germanus wrote that the population of Constantinople consisted of ‘the sordid droppings of prostitutes and adulterous connections, offspring of servant girls bought for cash, sprung willy nilly from the Rhos or the descendants of Hagar and the rest of the racial stew’.¹²⁴ It is also likely that the special treatment accorded by the Latin Emperors to the population had similarly contributed to forestalling any resistance. No records of any effective contacts or attempts to build alliances with any of the three Greek statelets have come down to us. This fact is quite odd and speaks volumes about the Greek mentality. The internecine wars and lack of any coordination between Nicaea, Epirus, Trebizond, and the indigenous Orthodox population of the Latin Empire are surprising but also revelatory.

Conclusion

This mutual resentment was mirrored in the statelets’ religious affairs. In principle, there were palpable differences between the position and influence of the Eastern Orthodox patriarchs and the pope. While the pope was entitled to organise crusades and claimed the

¹²² Henry Treece. *The Crusades*. Barnes & Noble Inc, London, 1962, pp. 230-231.

¹²³ David F. Burg. *A World History of Tax Rebellions: An Encyclopedia of Tax Rebels, Revolts and Riots from Antiquity to the Present*. Routledge, New York – London, 2003, pp. xx-xxiv. See also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Byzantine_revolts_and_civil_wars.

¹²⁴ *Germanos. Patriarches Konstantinoupoleos -Nikaias (1222-1240)*. N. Lagopate(ed.), Typographic Moreas, 1913. p. 282, lines 23–6. *Γερμανός ο Β΄, πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως-Νικαίας (1222-1240)*, Λαγοπάτης, Σ. Ν.(ed.), Εκ των Τυπογραφείων της Εφημερίδος “Μορέας”, 1913, p. 282, lines 23–6.[‘vios synggrammata kai didaskalia autou, anekdotoi omiliai kai epistolai to proton ekdi domenai’].

authority to replace kings and have the last say in resolving military conflicts in Western Europe, things in Eastern Europe were far less centralised. Each of the small Orthodox states sought to have in place its own independent patriarch, which was convenient to each country. The influence of these senior clerics rarely transcended the boundaries of the territories they represented and served. The Greek statelets that came into being after the fall of Constantinople each chose a path similar to that taken previously by Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia. They created their own patriarchates and sought consolidation and international recognition. However, the persistence of Nicaea is impressive. According to Angold: 'Theodore Laskaris and his Patriarch laid claim to all prerogatives that the Emperors and Patriarchs had enjoyed before 1204. Almost from the first it was maintained that though Constantinople had fallen its Imperial traditions to Nicaea'.¹²⁵ These states' fights continued in the domain of religion. It would hardly be a precedent for the patriarch of one Orthodox country to anathematise the patriarch or the king or both of another Orthodox country. However, this was always dictated by political circumstances. Although the epoch that is the subject of this study was profoundly religious to an extent that, to an ordinary man, non-fasting was a transgression of catastrophic proportions, we can say that Orthodox rulers were far more pragmatic and flexible in their approach toward the Church and did not suffer from unnecessary scruples. Based upon the analysis made in this chapter of the situation in Eastern Europe and Asia Minor following the fall of Constantinople in 1204, it is safe to say that there is no evidence that the Orthodox faith played any unifying role in the Empire of Nicaea, the Despotate of Epirus, or the Empire of Trebizond. Quite the opposite: there are historical records pointing towards a fiercer opposition *among* these three statelets than *between* any of them as a separate entity and the Latin Empire. The only exception was the alliance between Bulgaria and Nicaea and the subsequent council that resulted in the return of Bulgaria to Orthodoxy.

The subsequent joint siege of Constantinople mounted by these two powers in 1235 can be interpreted as a religious war against the Latin Empire at a time when politics, diplomacy, and the clergy in both Bulgaria and Nicaea joined hands for the sake of a greater common goal. But even this formidable feat was haunted by the shadow of Nicaea's subtle diplomacy, which sought to pull Bulgaria out of the Catholic bloc, thwarting Ivan Asen II's aspirations to the throne of Constantinople. Whether Ivan Asen II was aware of this or not is impossible to say; the fact remains, though, that he had invested all of his energy into this undertaking. What is especially striking is that this alliance excluded both Trebizond and Epirus, and that the Greek

¹²⁵ Michael Angold. *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, pp.13.

population of Constantinople did nothing to assist its besiegers. At the time of the siege, any help from behind the walls could have proven decisive. But the Greek Orthodox population remained silent and indifferent. Meanwhile, Trebizond and the remains of Epirus could not overcome their prejudices and egos in the name of a greater goal. This is an unfortunate fact for everyone for whom the Latin presence in Constantinople was distasteful. If the Orthodox Church could not even use religion to unite its people, nothing could do the job.

Nonetheless, the persistent Empire of Nicaea managed on its own to attain its ultimate goal of capturing Constantinople after decades of wars and a long series of alliances, each involving its own set of compromises. There is no doubt that this seminal event caused a wave of satisfaction to sweep across the Orthodox world. But even then, Trebizond continued to exist as a separate state, refusing to fit within the framework of a restored Byzantium. This was a highly significant fact provided more proof that religion always comes second to politics, diplomacy, and ambition. The recapture of Constantinople and the virtual disappearance of the Latins in Eastern Europe had wide repercussions in the West. As Donald M. Nicol puts it, 'The Western attitude to the event..., was one of bitterness and resentment. To the interested parties in Western Europe and to the Roman Church the collapse of the Latin Empire spelt failure'.¹²⁶ Having begun as a purely religious undertaking, the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire it spawned quickly faded into obscurity under the weight of military-political circumstances, without ever delivering upon its original purpose.

¹²⁶ Donald.M.Nicol. *The Last Centuries of Byzantium 1261-1453*. Cambridge University Press, 1993 Second Edition, page 18.

PART II

The Account of the Silent Eyewitnesses of the Fourth Crusade

Chapter VI

The Archaeology: 'Terra incognita' in Crusaders Historiography: Why is Archaeology Important?

Introduction

Whenever one deals with books and other published material on the subject of the crusades, one is bound to notice a gap for which there seems no logical explanation: the almost total absence of archaeological material. Researching and interpreting history can be difficult and ambiguous – it is, therefore, advisable that all available sources are used. For the most part, however, modern historians tend to support their conclusions used exclusively written sources. Indisputably, written sources in the medieval period provide a wellspring of information, despite the fact that authors were biased and prone to exaggeration. It is no secret that historical sources often contain inaccurate information that requires further interpretation to set the record straight. Yet interpretation can sometimes provoke more questions than can be answered.

In contrast, an archaeological artefact represents an unadulterated historical source. The very origin of the word 'archaeology' comes from the Greek αρχαίος 'ancient' and λόγος 'word'. Archaeological evidence talks to us in many different ways, through artefacts, stratigraphy of settlements and fortresses, the circulation of coinage, and data from necropolises. When the chroniclers remain silent, archaeological data– tangible evidence in the form of objects – may speak up. Placed in its proper context and thoroughly researched, an archaeological artefact or situation has undisputed scientific value – it forms a direct contact with the past, which facilitates our better understanding of it. For periods devoid of literary evidence, archaeology remains the sole source of information. But oddly, archaeology gets pushed aside whenever written sources are available. But are written sources enough? As Collin Renfrew and Paul Bahn note, 'archaeology can also contribute a great deal to the understanding even of those periods and places where documents, inscriptions and other literary evidence do exist. Quite often, it is the archaeologist who unearths such evidence at

first place'.¹ It would be unfair if we did not acknowledge that there are scholars who have attempted to merge the best of the two sciences. For example, there are a number of published proceedings from conferences dedicated to archaeology in the Holy Land and the Mediterranean as a whole, and works on material culture.²

Recently, a new book has managed successfully to use the available archaeological data in order to enhance our knowledge regarding the Crusades. Aleks Pluskowski's *The Archaeology of the Prussian Crusade* is the first work on archaeology for this topic and was published in 2013.³ As Thomas J. T. Williams states: 'This book is thus a major contribution to the study of the Crusades in particular, to medieval studies more widely, and to archaeology in general.'⁴ A good example of how archaeology should be combined with history is the work of Adrian J. Boas, who researches and publishes on the archaeology of the Holy Land considering the art and coinage in circulation at the time of the Crusades in Jerusalem.⁵ Several scholars interested by the history of the Military Orders have successfully merged archaeological data and history. Christer Carlsson, for example, explores archaeological data relating to the Orders from Scandinavia⁶ and Ronnie Ellenblum's popular article about the earthquake-damaged crusader castle Vadum Jacob, an outpost overlooking the Jordan River merges archaeology and history.⁷ Ronnie Ellenblum underlines the importance of the

¹ Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*. Thames & Hudson, London, 2010, p.12.

² Jack Meinhard. *Crusaders in the Holy Land, The Archaeology of Faith: A collection of Essays* Published by the Biblical Archaeology Society. Washington DC, Biblical Archaeology Society, 2005. See also: Peter W. Edbury and Sophia Kalopissi-Verti (eds). *Archaeology and the crusades: proceedings of the round table*. Nicosia, 1 February 2005. Pierides Foundation Publications, 2005.

³ Aleksander Pluskowski. *The Archaeology of the Prussian Crusade. Holy War and Colonisation*. London & New York: Routledge, 2013

⁴ Thomas J T Williams. Book Reviews, *Medieval Archaeology*, Volume 58, issue 1, pp. 389-463. http://www.academia.edu/14484537/The_Archaeology_of_the_Prussian_Crusade_Aleks_Pluskowski_review (Accessed 06.03.2019)

⁵ Adrian J. Boas. *Crusader Archaeology. The material culture of the Latin East*. Routledge, London 1999. See also: Adrian J. Boas. *Archaeology of the Military Orders (A survey of the urban centres, rural settlements and castles of the military orders in the Latin East c.1120 – 1291)*. 2006, Routledge, New York.

⁶ Christer Carlsson. The religious Orders of Knighthood in Medieval Scandinavia: Historical and Archaeological Approaches. Benjamin Kedar, Jonathan Riley-Smith, Jonathan Phillips (eds.). *Crusades*. Volume 5, 2006, Ashgate, Cornwall, pp.131-142.

⁷ Ronnie Ellenblum, S. Marco, A. Agnon, T. Rockwell and Adrian Boas. Crusader castle torn apart at down, 20 May 1202. *Geology*, vol. 26, 1988, pp.303-306.

collaboration between the two sciences: ‘The amount and timing of slip in historical earthquakes can be reconstructed with exceptional precision by combining evidence from archaeological observations and historical accounts’.⁸ The extensive work of Denys Pringle with material evidences and archaeological data from Syria and Palestine has also resulted in excellent case studies and publications.⁹ So the trend is set and there is some excellent works in the field. However, none of these works concerns the Fourth Crusade and there is, in particular, no complex study of the archaeological data from the Balkans. No work has been done to merge the material culture and the artefacts’ locations with the related written sources from the era. This is the main goal of Part II of this thesis.

The (im)mortal kings

Existing Western and Greek chronicles dating from the age of the crusades are well documented and thoroughly researched and interpreted, especially Latin and Greek ones. There is hardly an author who has not read and analysed this material in detail. Nevertheless, there are so many controversies, ambiguities, and uncertainties that there are mutually contradictory schools of thought in crusader historiography. The interpretation of written sources keeps many scholars busy, but gaps abound that are hard to dismiss. Thus, while the use of Arabic texts about the crusades peaked in recent decades owing to the work of Amin Maalouf and Carole Hillenbrand, Orthodox-Slavonic writings have been largely ignored by many modern historians.¹⁰ This raises the question of whether history as we know it today is complete enough. We are not talking here about some sensational new discovery but, rather, a thorough and careful reading of the extant written sources and an analysis of archaeological material. Why do people in this field fail to utilise all available sources in order to enrich their research and paint a fuller picture of the past? The language barrier is not a justification for such failure, for it is inconceivable that all modern historians are sufficiently fluent in Latin or ancient Greek. Orthodox-Slavonic sources have been recently translated into English, but they are

⁸ Ibid. p. 303

⁹ Denys Pringle. *Churches, castles and landscape in the Frankish East*. Variorum Collected Studies Series Vol. 1018. Farnham: Ashgate.2013. See also: Denys Pringle. Crusader castles and fortifications: the Armenian connection. Mutaftian, C. (ed.) *La Méditerranée des Arméniens, XIIe–XVe siècle*. Lisbon: Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, pp. 353-372.

¹⁰ Amin Maalouf. *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*. New York, Schocken Books, 1984. See also: Carole Hillenbrand. *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*. Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1999.

omitted in fundamental works on the crusades. Meanwhile, archaeology is not a preferred source of information. Why archaeology is considered to be an auxiliary discipline, a less important offshoot of history, is a question that needs to be addressed. Conor Costick argues that ‘subject[s] like Archaeology [are] so much more rooted in the materials rather than ideas of society’.¹¹ Seen by archaeologists as mere theoreticians – people who write without having first-hand knowledge of their subject matter – historians for their part look down upon their colleagues in archaeology as mere craftsmen who, preoccupied with a spade and brush, are incapable of summarising the results of their work and limit themselves to identifying and dating finds. One example of such distrust has been described aptly by Collin Renfrew and Paul Bahn:

Most anthropologists and historians tend to think of a king as the leader of state society. So when the earliest records for Anglo-Saxon England, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which took final shape about AD 1155 refer to kings around AD 500 it is easy for the historian to think of kings and states at that period. But the archaeology strongly suggests that a full state society did not emerge until the time of King Offa of Mercia in around AD 780, or perhaps King Alfred of Wessex in AD 871.¹²

We witness this antagonism between the two fields in the book *Historical Archaeology*, written by an international team of archaeologists. They define the problem as ‘the distinction between written and material sources, and the tendency to try to prioritise one over another’.¹³ This tendency goes deeper, though, sometimes evolving into plain negation: ‘The dominance of written word over archaeological material has recently been challenged by the recognition that historical sources do not provide objective, absolute statements about the nature of past societies’.¹⁴ Furthermore, archaeology as a science has the ‘desire to escape the supplementary role of ‘handyman of history’ as well as to raise the professional standing of the field and its proponents’.¹⁵ In specialised archaeological literature, one may encounter theories such as

¹¹ Conor Kostick (ed.). *The Crusades and the near East*. Introduction from Conor Kostick, Routledge, London, 2011, pp.1-2.

¹² Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*, p.183-186. The term state society is subject of another research conducted by Colin Renfrew: ‘Systems Collapse as Social Transformation: Catastrophe and Anastrophe in Early State Society’. Colin Renfrew and Kenneth L. Cooke (eds) *Transformations: Mathematical Approaches to Cultural Change*, Academic Press, New York, 1979, pp.481-506.

¹³ Pedro Paulo, A. Funari, Martin Hall and Sian Jones (eds). *Historical Archaeology. Back from the edge*. Routledge, London, 1999, p.10.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.222.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.12.

‘anti-historicism’ or ‘new archaeology’.¹⁶ But if we leave theories aside and take a practical look at the possibility for a collaborative effort between the two disciplines, we are bound to discover that the great variety of research tools and methods used by archaeologists remain an enigma for most historians.

The diversity of methodologies used by archaeology remains an enigma to the majority of the historians. Anthropology, dendrochronology, paleobotany, numismatics, and epigraphy are but some of the ways to better explore the past. Interdisciplinary methods supply priceless information that is often definitive and indisputable. Determining the diet of ancient peoples from food residues on unearthed household utensils or making facial reconstructions based on skull bones – things like these provide a unique insight into the past. Of course, it is not necessary to have intrinsic knowledge of the theory and method of archaeology or to take part in field excavations in order to consider such findings in large-scale historical research projects. Science, in the broadest sense of the word, is about objective knowledge, a system of known facts and recommended practices capable of leading to prognoses and provable hypotheses. Scholars are also expected to publish information in such a way as to allow other scientists to verify their conclusions. The results of this process enable better understanding of past events while promoting a higher ability to predict future ones of the same type as those upon which they were tested. What is needed, therefore, is a broader view and willingness to focus on all available sources of historical information. Historical and archaeological approaches are not two separate ways of reconstructing historical facts; rather, they are parts of the same puzzle that humankind seeks to put together in its quest for the truth. As far as the crusades are concerned, this is done extremely rarely.

This thesis focusses on the Fourth Crusade and on finds in modern-day Bulgaria, and it will attempt to synchronise these. This is justified, since, in one way or another, the participants in this crusade permanently settled in these lands rather than continue on their way to the Holy Land. When these findings are integrated with written sources, the result is a fuller, more authentic picture of the past. One example already discussed in Chapter IV is the grave of Kaloyan, that was discovered in excavations in the mediaeval Bulgarian capital of Tarnograd.¹⁷ Evidence presented within this thesis has proven that Kaloyan converted to Catholicism in 1204. However, archaeological evidence has revealed that this conversion was

¹⁶ Bruce G. Trigger. *A history of archaeological thought*. Cambridge University press, Cambridge, 1989, p.322.

¹⁷ Веселина Инкова. *Калояновото погребение: технико-лабораторни изследвания*. Българската Академия на Науките, София, 1979. [Veselina Inkova, *Kaloyan's Funeral: technical laboratory studies*, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, 1979].

but a tactical move by Kaloyan, and that after his death, the king was buried in strict accordance with Orthodox ritual without the diadem and sceptre given to him by the pope. Despite senior clerics dispatched to Bulgaria by the pope and despite all other efforts undertaken by the Papacy, Catholicism during the reign of Kaloyan remained on paper only. Further evidence for this can be found in the architectural plan of the Church of the Holy Forty Martyrs in Tarnovgrad built by Ivan Asen II in 1230, discussed in Chapter II, which reveals a proper Orthodox layout. This is one less mystery that clarifies the true alignment of the Bulgarians in this period. In addition, an anthropological reconstruction based on the skull of Kaloyan was made by the Bulgarian anthropologist Professor Yordan Yordanov (Figure 8).¹⁸ There is literally no other way to look more deeply into the past than through archaeology and interdisciplinary methods. Indeed, through these methods, the past can look back at you!

¹⁸ Йордан Йорданов. *Пътека към себе си*. Издателство проф. Марин Дринов, София., 2003, стр. 58-62. Yordan Yordanov, *Path to yourself*. Prof. Marin Drinov Publishers, Sofia, 2003, p.58-62. See also: Милена Димитрова. 'Епилепсия мъчила цар Калоян'. *Вестник Монитор*, 19.10.2012. [Milena Dimitrova. 'Kaloyan suffered from traumatic epilepsy'. Web Site. Newspaper Monitor, 19.10.2012.]Retrieved from: <http://www.politika.bg/article?id=29208> (Accessed 26.04.2018).

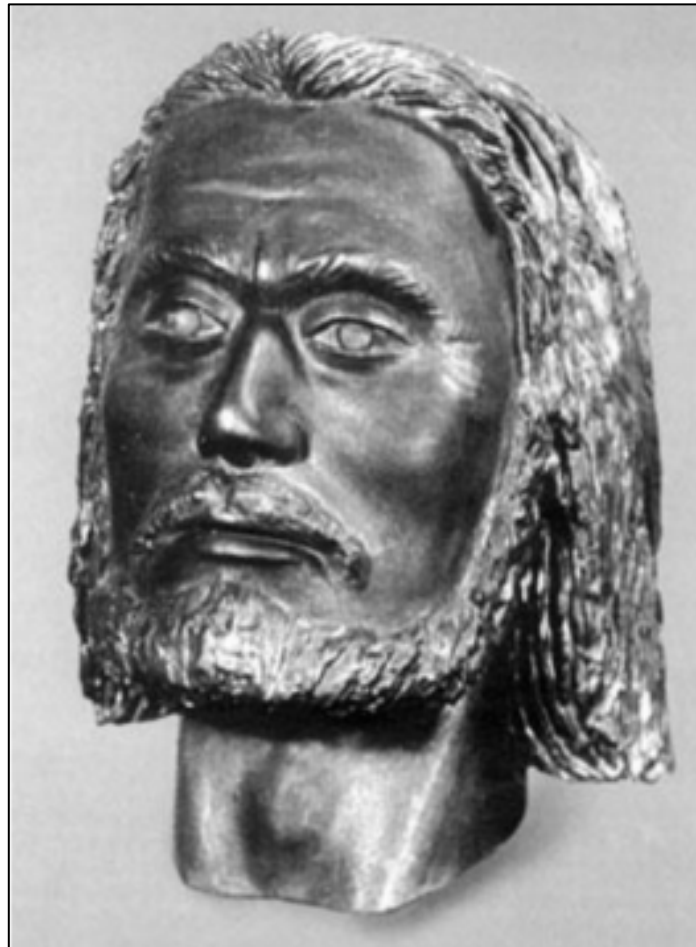


Figure 8. Antropological reconstruction of king Kaloyan's skull. Image: prof. Yordan Yordanov.

Another similarly significant discovery that provides further evidence of the power of archaeology is the tomb of the English king Richard III, found in Leicester in 2012. DNA analysis proves beyond doubt that the remains were of the king himself, while a forensic examination shows that he was killed by multiple blows with axes and halberds and that he had scoliosis of the spinal column. In other words, Richard was a hunchback.¹⁹ Additional DNA analysis revealed that Richard dined on peacock and heron, had worms, and also looked quite different from the portraits made thirty years after his death, since he almost certainly had blue eyes (a 96% probability) and blond hair (77% probability).²⁰ As we can see, the restoration of history through archaeology provides detailed results that are unattainable through other

¹⁹ Buckley R, Morris M, Appleby J, King T, O'Sullivan D, Foxhall L. 'The King in the Car Park: New Light on the Death and Burial of Richard III in the Grey Friars church, Leicester in 1485'. *Antiquity*, issue 872013, pp.519-538. Retrieved from: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/S0003598X00049103>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

²⁰ Bryony Jones. 'Five things we've learned about Richard III since he was found'. 23.03.2015, CNN. Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/03/22/europe/richard-iii-burial-5-things/index.html>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

methods. The Kings are definitely mortal, but the information from their graves gives life for fascinating research.

Finding a needle in a haystack

How precise can archaeology be? On the topic of Western soldiers in the Balkans, archaeologists have discovered evidence of perhaps the earliest encounter between Westerners and the local population that may have established a hostile relationship between the two from the beginning. The 2014 archaeological season at the Lyutitza fortress yielded an interesting discovery: two unique spurs with 'dragon's head' points (Figure 9).²¹



Figure 9. Dragon's head Viking spurs [c.11th century] found in Lyutitza fortress, Bulgaria. Image: Bulgarian National Museum – Sofia.

The dragon head is a motif characteristic of Scandinavian jewelry and mythology.²² The spurs date from the late-tenth to mid-eleventh centuries.²³ They are luxury items, crafted from bronze, and gilded, with traces of colour paste remaining in parts of the exquisitely carved gold

²¹ Константин Събчев. 'Откриха в Лютица шпори на вигинги'. *Вестник Стандарт*. Konstatntin Sabchev. Viking's spurs found in Lyutitza fortress. *Standart Newspaper*. Retrieved from : http://www.standartnews.com/lyubopitno-nauka/otkriha_v_lyutitsa_shpori_na_vikingi-271185.html. (Accessed 12.05.2018).

²² Christine Rauer. *Beowulf and the Dragon: Parallels and Analogues*. D.S.Brewer, Cambridge, 2000, pp.194-195.

²³ Guy Francis Laking. *A Record of European Armour and Arms through Seven Centuries*. Bell, London, 1920, Chapter I, Part 3.

plated ornaments. They probably belonged to a Scandinavian mercenary in Byzantine employment, which was a common practice at the time.²⁴ Furthermore, the gold plating on the spurs suggests the owners' rank within this mercenary band was high. The spurs constitute a unique, well-preserved piece of evidence of a Western presence in these lands before the crusades. These people were, in all probability, mercenaries under the command of Harald Hardrada, who served the Byzantines between 1034 and 1042, protecting these mountainous places with his elite Varangian Guard on behalf of the Byzantine emperor.²⁵ These tough, fearsome Vikings were involved in many battles along the borders of the immense Byzantine Empire, but their biggest difficulties came from the Bulgarians. Hardrada himself had several successes in battle with Bulgarians, earning him the nickname *Bolgara brennir* ('Bulgar-burner').²⁶ What a perfect correlation between these Viking spurs and written information that has come to us via Scandinavian sagas and Byzantine authors! Again, there is complete concurrence between archaeological artefacts and written sources. The outfit under Hardrada's command is estimated to have numbered between 200 and 450 men, therefore the odds of finding a pair of spurs belonging to one of these fighters in the territories of Bulgaria or Byzantium are extremely low.

There is also an inverse connection caused by Bulgarian artefacts found far to the north in Scandinavia. Amid the Bulgarian loot that the Vikings took with them back to their homeland is a silver goblet discovered on the island of Gotland in Sweden, manufactured in the eleventh century (Figure 10). In style and ornamentation, it is similar to one used by the Bulgarian Grand Župan Sivin in the tenth century, found in the capital of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, Veliki Preslav.²⁷

²⁴ Филип Петрунов, Росен Пеевски. *Каталог Калоянов Кръг. Средновековни находки от Лютица*, Уникарт ЕООД, София, 2015, стр.19. Filip Petrunov, Rosen Peevski. *Catalogue Kaloyan's circle. Medieval artefacts from Lyutica*. Unikart Ltd, Sofia, 2015, p.19.

²⁵ Sigfus Blöndal. 'The Last Exploits of Harald Sigurdson in Greek Service. A Chapter from the History of the Varangians'. *Classica of mediaevalia*, II, 1 (1939), 1–26.

²⁶ Sigfus Blöndal. *The Varangians of Byzantium*. Benedikt Benedikz (trans), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007, p.57.

²⁷ Тотю Тотев. 'За един паралел на чашата на Сивин жупан от Преслав'. *Археология*, VIII, 1 (1966), 31–37. [Totyu Totev. 'About a parallel of joupán Sivin's mug from Preslav'. *Archaeology magazine*, VIII, 1, (1966), p.31-37].



Figure 10. Upper: A silver goblet found on Gotland Island, c. eleventh century. Image: Smirnov, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Lower: A silver goblet found at Veliki Preslav, Bulgaria with dedication to Grand Zupan Sivin carved on the bottom of the vessel, c. tenth century. Displayed at National Historical Museum-Sofia. Image: Totyu Totev.

This example, albeit unrelated directly to the crusades, proves that archaeology is in a position to find the proverbial ‘needle in a haystack’ and confirm actual historical events. More importantly, it proves the veracity of other sources’ reports of such events. Since not all written sources are trustworthy or based on observed experiences, finding the right artefact in the right place can confirm or deny whether a reported event took place.

These are not the first spurs found in the region in recent years, but they are the earliest. Spurs from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are a sure sign of a knight’s presence, because spurs were only used by knights at the time. On account of the proximity (approximately 50 km) between the fortress of Lyutitza and Adrianople and the expensive material from which this decorated spur was made, one can easily deduce that the city was captured by the knights of the Fourth Crusade and provided a temporary residence for a noble baron. During this archaeological season alone, excavations unearthed 180 coins from the period, as well as numerous arrowheads and knives. In addition, six silver coins of John III Dukas Vatatzes were discovered at the fortress of Rodestitza (Rodestiuc), located 40 km from Adrianople in the

same direction as Lyutitza, toward the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria (Figure 11).²⁸ All of this shows a strong presence of people of noble birth and the vigorous use of these fortresses during the time of the Latin Empire (1204-1261).



Figure 11. The coin hoard from early thirteenth century found in Rodestitza fortress (Rodestiuc). Image: Ivaylo Kanev.

These are but a few examples to illustrate the manner in which archaeology can help reconstruct history as effectively as written sources.

Difficulties and limitations of archaeological research

It must be emphasised that the lands where most of the crusades took place are, at present, less accessible than they were at the time of the crusades themselves. Israel, Syria, and Egypt are countries torn by war and internal strife, while it is exceedingly hard in Turkey to obtain a permit for archaeological excavations. In most of these countries, where the crusaders are still regarded as aggressors, there is a negative public attitude toward all monuments of culture and archaeological finds dating from this period. Significantly, the rhetoric employed by ISIS and other terrorist organisations tends to brand Westerners as crusaders.²⁹ Cultural artefacts remaining from the crusader era are either purposely destroyed or sold on the black

²⁸‘Имане от златно-сребърни монети открито в Родопите’, News web-site; [‘Treasure from bilon coins was found in Rhodopi mountain’], Retrieved from: <http://www.ploshtadslaveikov.com/imane-ot-zlatno-srebarni-moneti-otkri/>. (Accessed 18.04.2018).

²⁹Jason T Roche. *Islamic State and the appropriation of the Crusades – a medieval historian’s take*. Published online 12 July 2017. Retrieved from: <https://theconversation.com/islamic-state-and-the-appropriation-of-the-crusades-a-medieval-historians-take-75319>. (Accessed 27.04.2018). Jason Roche is Lecturer in Medieval History, Manchester Metropolitan University and his article is not the typical bunch of words for the press. It is hard to find academic research on the topic for the attitude of Islamic State towards the Westerners, referring them as a Crusaders.

market. Islamic extremists believe they have a religious duty to destroy art belonging to any sect or religion other than their own. There are many examples of this. Irina Bokova, the Bulgarian Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), urged Iraq and Syria to safeguard their nations' troves of antiquities as assaults waged by ISIS put relics at risk of looting.³⁰ In Egypt, the terrorists have targeted sites of cultural heritage in order to prevent cultural tourism. According to Francesco Bandarin, UNESCO Assistant Director General for Culture: 'Antiquities plundering and trafficking is estimated to turn a \$7 billion underground profit annually.'³¹ Nonetheless, atrocities against cultural heritage artefacts continue. On 24 July 2014, ISIS blew up the tomb of Jonah and a mosque, while they also destroyed St. George's Monastery church, one of the oldest in the Mosul region of Iraq. Meanwhile, much of the magnificent ancient architecture in the Syrian city of Palmyra no longer exists, and the Deir el-Zour Armenian Church, accepted as a memorial to the 1.5 million slaughtered in the Armenian genocide in Turkey, was detonated. The oldest example in the world of a Christian house-church was in Dura-Europos, Syria, which contained the earliest depictions of Jesus Christ ever found, dating from 235, but ISIS looted the site and sold its treasures on the black market.³² The international market has reflected this trend even in official statistical data. As to how many of these lost treasures have disappeared from all record, it is anyone's guess. Iraq has increased its antiquities exports over 492.4 percent over the course of a single year, and that is just according to US tracking, while in other countries on the US black list including Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, the exports have increased to between 55.4 and 134.3 percent.³³ These shocking numbers reflect irrecoverable losses that will forever impact the study of history and archaeology. There is little hope that in the coming decades the situation will return to normal or that unperturbed scholarly research and archaeological excavations in these areas will resume.

By contrast, Bulgaria is a veritable oasis of peace and tranquillity, a country with a tradition of regular archaeological excavations. As noted above, there are many pieces of the

³⁰ Robbie Gramer. 'UNESCO Fights Back As ISIS Tries to Stamp Out Culture'. *Foreign Policy*, 12 April 2017. Retrieved from: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/04/12/unesco-united-nations-isis-islamic-state-cultural-antiquities-trade-irina-bokova-refugees-heritage/>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

³¹ Bill Briggs. 'How Terrorists Tap a Black Market Fueled by Stolen Antiquities', 23.06.2014, NBC News. Retrieved from: <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/iraq-turmoil/how-terrorists-tap-black-market-fueled-stolen-antiquities-n137016>. (Accessed 18.04.2018).

³² Denis MacEoin. The destruction in Middle East, *Gatestone Institute*, 27.12.2014. Retrieved from <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4973/destruction-middle-east-antiquities>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

³³ Rick St. Hilaire. 'Conflict and the Heritage Trade: Rise in U.S. Imports of Middle East "Antiques" and "Collectors' Pieces" Raises Questions'. Blog: *Cultural Heritage Lawyer*, 06.10.2014. Retrieved from <http://culturalheritagelawyer.blogspot.co.nz/2014/10/conflict-and-heritage-trade-rise-in-us.html>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

historical-archaeological puzzle still waiting to be uncovered and assembled, so it is high time somebody did just that. But Bulgarian archaeologists and historians have sometimes insuperable limitations.

Having considered the challenges that archaeology as a science faces on a global scale, it is advisable to focus on the problems of Bulgarian archaeology. The interesting and important artefacts from Bulgaria included in this thesis are the fruit of many years of hard work and a successful race against a host of unfavourable circumstances. The issues in Bulgarian archaeology are numerous and of a diverse nature. A key problem is detrimental treasure hunting. While treasure hunting in Bulgaria is outlawed, the absence of any form of institutionalised retribution and a corrupt judicial and law enforcement system allows treasure hunters to act with impunity, causing severe damage to archaeological sites, irrecoverably destroying information. The number of treasure hunters may never be established with any certainty, but, according to a Fox News estimate, numbers 50,000 or more.³⁴ The country's high unemployment rate forces people to assault archaeological sites on a daily basis in the hope of eking out a living. Their mode of operation is barbaric and destructive: to get their hands on a single coin, they destroy entire cultural layers including walls, floorings, and *in situ* features. Invaluable information is lost at the swing of a pickaxe. Treasure hunters only care for metal objects, so everything else is expendable and slated for destruction. Although there is no ISIS-style terrorism in Bulgaria, treasure-hunting terrorism is quite comparable in its impact and threat, since treasure hunters number in the tens of thousands. These people are armed with state-of-the-art equipment and off-road vehicles. One telling viewpoint is that of a Bulgarian assistant to the Australian journalist David O'Shia of SBS TV, who worked on a treasure hunting documentary in June 2009.³⁵ The data he gathered are staggering and look even bleaker when compared with data from the court system, since, although illegal, treasure-hunters are not held accountable and face no consequences – all the consequences are for the archaeologists, who are forced to work with minimum funding and for minimum pay, often in a race against time. Threats from well-organised and equipped gangs of treasure-hunters are commonplace. Trafficking in antiquities is comparable in scale to drugs or weapons in

³⁴ 'Treasure hunters strip Bulgaria of its ancient treasures, destroying a cultural legacy', Associated Press . Retrieved from: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/10/26/treasure-hunters-strip-bulgaria-its-ancient-treasures-destroying-cultural/>. (Accessed 27.04.2018).

³⁵ Ivan Dikov. 'Bulgaria: Archaeology and Treasure Hunting Paradise. Or Hell'. 31.07.2009, Novinite.com. Retrieved from <http://www.novinite.com/articles/106385/Bulgaria%3A+Archaeology+and+Treasure+Hunting+Paradise.+Or+Hell>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

Bulgaria, so these people are jealously territorial and their annual revenue is estimated at €260 million.³⁶ In the context of such data, the statistics of the criminal justice system are simply pitiful: out of 160-200 treasure hunting cases heard annually, most are rejected due to lack of evidence. A few people receive suspended sentences or probation, but only a couple receive jail time each year. A total of nine perpetrators were convicted and sentenced to prison between 2009 and 2014.³⁷

Bulgarian archaeologists have no universal tools to counteract treasure hunters. Methods of guarding important sites vary from parking a backhoe (if one is available) on top of a particularly promising section of the site to thwart midnight raiders to hiring 24/7 human security guards (which is usually impossible due to lack of funds). On occasion, colleagues get a chance to document an artefact thanks to the ‘generosity’ of treasure-hunters who let them handle it for a brief photo session, although an artefact removed from the context of its cultural layer carries very little information. To sum it up, the work of an archaeologist in Bulgaria is thankless, faced with all sorts of challenges, and ill-paid.

When back in 1999 I joined the Archaeological Department of the Museum of History in the city of Haskovo as archaeologist-curator, my monthly salary was BGN 110 (around \$60 USD). Now, almost twenty years later, salaries vary between €450-500 a month, which is a major challenge for my fellow archaeologists.³⁸ Another aspect of the financial situation is the funding of archaeological excavations and the publication of their findings. In Bulgaria, private funding for archaeological work is almost non-existent. That being said, the excavation conducted in 1997 on the fortress of Okopa near Madjarovo, to which I will make reference later in this thesis, was funded with a \$500 donation from a now-defunct U.S. telecom provider, a very rare case of private funding. Generally, funding is the prerogative of the state and municipal authorities. However, since 1989, these authorities have been in never-ending financial crisis and science and culture remain on the back-burner. Planned excavations funded by the state are rare, whereas sites in urgent need of exploration, conservation, and restoration

³⁶ Ivan Dikov. ‘Treasure hunters in Bulgaria get away with crimes because of undesignated archaeological sites, archaeologist says.’ 10.06.2015. www.archaeologyinbulgaria.com. Retrieved from: <http://archaeologyinbulgaria.com/2015/06/10/treasure-hunters-in-bulgaria-get-away-with-crimes-because-of-undesignated-archaeological-sites-archaeologist-says>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

³⁷ ‘Bulgaria losing war against illicit artefact trafficking’. The Archaeology News Network. Retrieved from: <https://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.co.nz/2014/11/bulgaria-losing-war-against-illicit.html#zwMISGhZcqLQv54O.97>. (Accessed 11.05.2018). ‘5000 са активните иманяри в България’, (‘5000 are the active treasure hunters in Bulgaria’), 17.11.2014. Bulgarian news web-site. Retrieved from: <http://www.bnews.bg/article-122007> (Accessed 12.05.2018).

³⁸ ‘Average monthly salary in Bulgaria to exceed 500 euro in 2017’. Bulgarian National Radio, 24 January 2017. Retrieved from: <http://bnr.bg/en/post/100787401/average-monthly-salary-in-bulgaria-to-exceed-500-euro-in-2017>. (Accessed 27.04.2018).

are thousands. The other type of excavation, that designed to rescue a site from destruction, frequently remains incomplete, leaving behind a vulnerable site. By law, whenever excavation works for a new building result in the discovery of an archaeological monument, the owners of the plot are mandated to finance its exploration. In reality, this happens extremely rarely, usually ending with unfinished excavations, a refusal by the owner to pay for the exploration, and artefacts being left exposed and at the mercy of thieves. By virtue of this same law, everything that lies below ground is the property of the state, something that the owners of plots often refuse to accept. They always look for ways to bypass or breach the provisions of the law for personal gain or for the purpose of thwarting any further exploration on their property. Oftentimes, excavations for new buildings are conducted in the dead of night and all the earth, together with any artefacts in it, is dumped at an unknown location in order to avoid any excavation work and to enable the owners to carry on with construction undisturbed.

Another issue, which at its core is purely financial, concerns the publication of discovered material. There is practically no money for it. So, unless a private sponsor is found to bankroll a publication or a private publisher is willing to chance it *pro bono*, discovered material may remain in museum repositories for years. This is the current situation in Bulgaria, with thousands upon thousands of artefacts lying about in museum storage rooms waiting to be rediscovered and published for the benefit of the scientific community and the public at large.

Of course, the cloud has a silver lining. Bulgaria joined the European Union in 2007 and its accession has had a positive effect on archaeology as a whole. Soon afterwards, the first projects with European funding began to emerge, which encouraged exploration work. This includes, for instance, projects related to cultural tourism, the restoration of already known fortresses previously allowed to fall into disrepair, and research into new sites discovered serendipitously in the process of road or railway construction. Such sites get properly studied and documented with the relevant funding, which also covers the publication of findings and funding for conferences. In practice, every Bulgarian municipality and museum has received funding for research in recent years. The number of such projects grows with each passing year, resulting in up to 400 archaeological sites having been explored in 2014 using joint funding from the EU and Bulgarian government.³⁹ The total value of such funding reached

³⁹ Венета Павлова. 'Рекорден брой археологически проучвания през 2014 година'. 16.02.2015, Българско Национално Радио. Veneta Pavlova. 'A record number of archaeological excavations during year 2014'. Bulgarian National Radio. Retrieved from: <http://bnr.bg/radiobulgaria/post/100522367/rekorden-broi-arheologicheski-prouchvania-prez-2014-godina>. (Accessed 27.04.2018).

€2.55 million and the results of such assistance are evident.⁴⁰ Ironically, this is but one percent of the total revenue generated by the illegal trade in antiques in Bulgaria every year. Still, these are significant funds compared with the preceding two decades, and the potential impact of the proper use of these funds is quite substantial.

Luckily, it is not only the EU that funds archaeological research in Bulgaria. The U.S. is also participating in a number of projects, one of which has yielded results used in this study, namely the excavation at the Fraim fortress (Gluhite kamani locality) in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains, where evidence has been found of the presence of knights of the Third or Fourth Crusade on the site of the fortress. These are projects of the ICAB program, developed by the Department of Anthropology at the Field Museum (FM) in Chicago, in collaboration with the American Research Center in Sofia (ARCS), and with sponsorship from the America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF). This programme helps for the international collaboration between scholars from the U.S., Bulgaria, and other Balkan nations. The focus of ICAB is to finance either archaeological or bioarchaeological research, including fieldwork, museum research, and laboratory research. An amount totalling \$49,525.50 was provided in 2012 to fund ‘The Gluhite Kamani Cult Complex’, a project in which I took part before commencing work on this thesis. The project was led by Co-PIs Georgi Nekhrizov (Bulgarian National Institute of Archaeology and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) and Lynn E. Roller (Department of Art History, University of California, Davis).⁴¹ While this money is still less than the corresponding EU contribution, there is an important difference: funds from the EU are, more often than not, targeted at rescue excavations at sites threatened by new road construction or urban development projects, or for the development of tourist attractions. Thus, the primary goal of such funding is not to promote scientific research but, rather, to salvage sites that get in the way of developers and contractors. These projects always involve working under pressure since archaeologists at the site are bound by a strict deadline by which they must finish their excavation so that developers can resume construction. This is still better than nothing, but the funds coming from the U.S. for such projects are earmarked for research purposes, enabling calm and focused work, and usually achieve superior results. Foreign funding is more

⁴⁰ Daniel Valandovski. ‘Bulgaria’s Cabinet allows EU funding for rescue archaeological excavations in road construction projects.’ Internet article: <https://archaeologyinbulgaria.wordpress.com>. 8 April 2015. Retrieved online: <https://archaeologyinbulgaria.wordpress.com/2015/04/08/bulgarias-cabinet-allows-eu-funding-for-rescue-archaeological-excavations-in-road-construction-projects/>. (Accessed 27.04.2018).

⁴¹ Georgi Nekhrizov, Lynn E. Roller, Maya Vassileva, Julia Tzvetkova, Nadezhda Kecheva. ‘Gluhite Kamani: Old Questions and New Approaches.’ Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, *Thracia* 20, Sofia, 2012, pp.215-233. Available online: https://www.academia.edu/1584037/The_Gluhite_Kamani_Site_Old_Questions_and_New_Approaches. (Accessed 27.04.2018).

than welcome and certainly contributes to Bulgarian science. However, it cannot permanently improve the payment Bulgarian archaeologists receive for their effort on site.

Nonetheless, many of the problems listed above remain and unlawful practices continue to this day, even while my fellow archaeologists work for meagre pay using obsolete equipment. The artefacts smuggled out of the country or destroyed through negligence constitute an irretrievable loss, so it is the desire of archaeologists to preserve what still remains intact. With the financial assistance of the European Union, this goal does not seem as remote anymore. However, in addition to money, the preservation and further development of archaeology in Bulgaria also requires legal reforms to ensure the safeguarding of archaeological monuments against encroachment, while stemming the trafficking of artefacts. What Bulgarian archaeologists do have, in excessive quantities, is their quixotic enthusiasm and passion for science. The fortunate combination of all these factors guarantees that, in the future, there will be many more important and exciting discoveries and that they will be accessible to the scientific and historical community.

Merging archaeology and history

It is high time for the interrelationship between history and archaeology to be raised to a new level. It is both inexplicable and unforgivable that, at the turn of the twenty-first century, historians like Thomas Madden and Christopher Tyerman simply ignore archaeology and the facts it reveals. The debate between different historiographical schools has reached such a level that books to be published to explain it.⁴² Significantly, in the writings of Runciman and Richard the word ‘archaeology’ is absent altogether. Thomas Asbridge notes only on one occasion that ‘Archaeological and textual evidence indicates that the Latins bought a wide array of European coinage with which to trade during the journey east’.⁴³ In this line of thought, the claim made by Tyerman on one of the three occasions that he does use the word ‘archaeology’ acquires somewhat ironic overtones. He writes: ‘Modern scholarship, while embracing a far wider range of sources, from canon law to archaeology, is no less prone to factionalism, the influence of politics as in Israeli school led by Joshua Prawer, or of conflicting metaphysical construct of the past’.⁴⁴ Why Tyerman does not follow the trends that he himself defines is an open-ended question. Instead, in 2011, Tyerman published a book in which he

⁴² Christopher Tyerman. *The Debate on the Crusades, 1099-2010 (Issues in Historiography)*. Manchester University Press, 2011.

⁴³ Thomas Asbridge. *The First Crusade: A New History*. Oxford University press, Oxford, 2004, p.90.

⁴⁴ Christopher Tyerman. *The Crusades*, Sterling Publishing. New York, 2009, p.184.

explains at great length the debates between the different trends in historiography. For that debate has reached a point where it takes whole books to explain it and it now appears that the leading historians are so set in their ways that nothing beyond their familiar manner of reconstructing history is of any interest to them. Thus, Tyerman's outline shows that, while crusader historians are aware of the kind of challenges they face in the twenty-first century, actually changing their techniques is another matter.

Only Jonathan Riley-Smith acknowledges, on two occasions, that archaeology has changed his own ideas and made him consider facts that his colleagues in the archaeological profession have disclosed. He writes: 'recent archaeology has revealed how large this castle [Bet Guvrin on the Palestinian coast] was. I used to believe that the order garrisoned it with mercenaries, but now I am convinced that it was far too important a commitment to be left unsupervised'.⁴⁵ The other occasion is also related to monumental architecture: 'Acre was a much more significant cultural center that it used to be given credit for. The quality of its buildings is being gradually revealed through archaeology'.⁴⁶ Of course, set amid the enormous body of work that Riley-Smith has produced, these two quotes are woefully inadequate to indicate any systematic use of or reference to archaeological sources in his books. But the good news is that Riley-Smith changed his opinion when faced with overwhelming archaeological evidence.

Just because a piece of writing makes a convincing and captivating read does not necessarily mean it is of guaranteed veracity. As we will see in the next chapters, archaeology is even capable of refuting or corroborating the information contained in certain written sources. This is no panacea, but, while writing a paper about a certain issue or region, an historian must check the relevant archaeological data and incorporate it into their study. As Anthony Luttrell rightly notes: 'Historians should be concerned with every aspect of the past and archaeologist primarily with non-written aspects of the past', and 'For many purposes a historian needs to appreciate the archaeologists' special expertise in order to be able to incorporate their findings into his own historical work, while archaeologists normally need, at least for post classical periods, to study and employ written evidence'.⁴⁷ Thus far, this seems to be but wishful thinking, but a main goal of this study is to challenge the status quo by proving

⁴⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith. *The Crusades: A History*. Yale University Press, Second edition. Imprint: Continuum, London- New York, 2005, p.80.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.232.

⁴⁷ Anthony Luttrell. 'Introduction:History and Archaeology', *Archaeology and Architecture of the Military Orders: New Studies* . Christer Carlsson, Dr Mathias Piana (eds.), Ashgate Publishing, Farnham, 2014, p.1.

through evidence that it is still possible to come across archaeological finds that help resolve unanswered questions.

Conclusion

While the Fourth Crusade, in general, enjoys less interest on the part of scholars than the first three crusades, archaeology has never previously been used to shed light on it. Since this thesis considers the Fourth Crusade, and since a large portion of the territories captured by the crusaders lie within the boundaries of modern-day Bulgaria, the next two chapters will discuss for the first time extensive archaeological data. Archaeological artefacts unearthed in Bulgaria are quite capable not only of substantiating the validity of written sources from that period but of offering a fresh insight on the subject, providing new information that complements what we already know about the Fourth Crusade. No scholarly paper about the Fourth Crusade that omits relevant archaeological material should ever claim completeness. Because the Fourth Crusade ended at Constantinople and its principal battlegrounds were in Europe, it would not be an overstatement to say that it was, for all intents and purposes, an internal European affair, although conceived and planned as an intercontinental endeavour. There is no excuse for a failure of modern science to make the most of the available data collected from archaeological sites in countries like Bulgaria, which, thankfully, has no wars at present and is part of the European Union. Such data, if properly interpreted and interwoven into information derived from written sources, can occasionally make or break any given hypothesis. The big challenge is to draw a parallel between the existing written sources and the material evidence from the period.

Now, it is time to examine the impartial wealth of material evidence from the time of the crusades in southeastern Europe and paint a fuller picture of the consequences of these massive military campaigns.

Chapter VII

The Archaeology of the Fourth Crusade: Cross-Referencing Artefacts with Written Sources

Introduction

As a science, archaeology uncovers very useful information that can be used in conjunction with written sources to reconstruct the past. However, archaeological data rarely find a proper place in the research papers of leading crusader historians. Such a gap is unacceptable in light of the wealth of data accumulated and the finds discovered in recent decades. For the purposes of this thesis, data about the settlement structure, the types of settlements, and their fortifications, as well as artefacts from southeastern Europe with an indubitably established link to the crusades will be juxtaposed with written sources. Exploring these battles, diplomatic exchanges, treaties, routes, and goals, we are faced with the basic question: did chroniclers convey an honest picture of the times in which they wrote, or did they embellish and inflate other people's stories that had been passed by word of mouth? In other words, did these things really happen? Since this thesis discusses the Fourth Crusade, we will focus our attention on it, without overlooking data relating to preceding crusades, which had a lasting impact and brought about a dramatic change in the life of Eastern Orthodox Slavs. The Fourth Crusade inflicted a deep spiritual wound upon Orthodoxy through the conquest and pillaging of Constantinople and its churches. However, the process that proved so detrimental to the Christian populations of southeastern Europe began long before this. This chapter seeks evidence for the impact on the daily life of ordinary people of the Fourth Crusade by correlating written sources and archaeological data. This chapter also seeks to uncover archaeological evidence of diplomatic relations between the Latin Empire, Bulgaria, and Byzantine world on the eve and after the Fourth Crusade. In this respect, we examine lead royal seals from the period found in Bulgaria and shed light on little-known facts about the communication between these parties.

The Fourth Crusade and its impact upon everyday life in Thrace

The crusaders' marches across the Balkans, especially during the period following the Third and throughout the Fourth Crusades, caused dramatic changes to the lives of the local population. After the fall of the First Bulgarian Kingdom to the Byzantines in 1018, the Balkans experienced almost two centuries of relative peace and stability. This is evidenced by

archaeological data from settlements that existed during this period. The preferred areas of habitation were plains and fertile valleys along major rivers. Large unfortified settlements were characteristic of southeastern Thrace during the ninth and tenth centuries. These reached a relatively high level of prosperity and welfare during this time.¹ There was a clear-cut class division in the necropolises, and archaeological data suggests there was large-scale economic and commercial activity. This period of prosperity, however, started to lose its lustre toward the end of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. The decline deepened a century later to reach monstrous proportions by the beginning of the thirteenth century. Then came a dramatic change at the end of twelfth century, as evidenced through archaeological excavations at multiple settlements including Karanovo, Dyadovo, Znamenets, Gipsovo, Gledachevo, Iskritza, Krum, and Polski Gradets.² This change found expression in burned, ruined, and abandoned settlements, evidence of migrations, and the creation of new settlements in hard-to-reach locations in the mountains, as well as demographic and ethnic changes. Further evidence is found in coinage in circulation at the time, which consists mostly of recycled coins of poor metal quality.³ There are a number of reasons that constitute the root cause of this dramatic change, such as the passage of the Third Crusade across the lands of Byzantium and the capture of Constantinople by the the Fourth Crusade. ‘Passage’ may not even be the right word as far as the Third Crusade is concerned, since some of the knights participating in this campaign conquered Philippopolis and Stenimachos in 1189 and settled there permanently, establishing the so called ‘Latin neighborhood’.⁴ The Fourth Crusade just fifteen years later turned these areas into a battleground again.

¹ Albena Mihailova. ‘La ville en Bulgarie Byzantine (XIe-XIIe siècle) : persistances et changements’. G. Kazakov, Tz. Stepanov (eds.). *Medieval Urbanism.Memory, Sacrality, Traditions*. University Publishing St. K. Ohridski, Sofia, 2007, pp. 22-23. Retrived from: http://gtbyzance.com/articles/Mediaevalia_Christiana_vol2.pdf. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

² Борис Борисов. ‘Средновековното село през 9-12 век на територията на днешна Югоизточна България’. Казимир Константинов, Борис Борисов, Росина Костова (ред.). *Проф.д.и.н. СтанчоВаклинов и Средновековната Българска култура*, Университетско издателство “Св.св Кирил и Методий”, ВеликоТърново, 2005, с. 334-348. [Boris Borisov. ‘Medieval villages during IX-XII century in today’s South-East Bulgaria’. Kazimir Konstantinov, Boris Borisov, Rosina Kostova (eds.). ‘*Prof.Stancho Vaklinov, Medieval Bulgarian culture*’. University publishers “St.St. Cyril and Methody”, Veliko Tarnovo, 2005, pp.334-348].

³ Камен Станев ‘Миграцията от Тракия към Северна България в края на XII – началото на XIII век и нейните последици’. Ангел Николов, Георги Николов (ред.). *Средновековният българин и другите, Сборник в чест на 60 годишнината на проф.дин. Петър Ангелов*, Университетско издателство “Св.Климент Охридски”, София, 2013р с. 207-226. [Kamen Stanev. ‘Migration from Thrace to Northern Bulgaria in the end of 12th and the beginning of 13th century and its consequences.’ Angel Nikolov, George Nikolov (eds.).*The Medieval Bulgarian and the others’ Corpus in honour of 60th anniversary of prof. Petar Angelov*, University of Sofia, Sofia, 2013, pp.207-226. See also: Boris Borisov. ‘Demographic and Ethnic Changes during XI - XII Century in Bulgaria’. *Archaeologia Bulgarica*. Volume 2, Sofia, 2007, pp.71-84.]

⁴ Alicia Simpson. *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, p.248. See also: Елена Кесякова, Александър Пижев, Стефан Шивачев. *Книга за Пловдив*.

A typical settlement in the fertile valleys of Thrace was Dyadovo, which looked as follows: seventy-five large stone houses up to 120 m² stood side-by-side with humble abodes put together with wood poles plastered with clay. Also, there were sixteen outbuildings, 244 waste disposal pits, and 226 graves in the surrounding area.⁵ There was class division in this settlement, as evidenced by the burial gifts in the necropolises as well as the architectural styles of the buildings. Archaeological data shows that this settlement lasted for at least 150 years, without being fortified at any point in its existence. The main sources of livelihood were agriculture and stockbreeding, determined through the analysis of pollen, grain, and animal bones analysis.⁶ Money circulated, too, as evidenced by thirty-nine coins found on site. These became more common toward the end of the settlement's existence. As Boris Borisov, the lead archaeologist of these excavations, writes, 'The Third Crusade dealt a big blow to the development of the settlement network, as during it many settlements found their doom. It was at that time when the settlements at Dyadovo, Ezero, Znamenets, Gipsovo, Iskritza, P. Gradets, Krum, etc., became extinct. Abandoned at the end of the twelfth century, they were never re-settled'.⁷

Slightly longer-lived were settlements located further from the main routes of the crusader armies. The commotion that followed the Fourth Crusade and the frequent passing of territories from one side to another spelled the end of unfortified settlements in the plains. The surviving population sought natural protection in the mountains and began to build inaccessible fortresses that were easy to defend and did not attract as much strategic interest. During a relatively short period of forty- to fifty-years, a complete transformation occurred in the way of life for Orthodox Christians, both Greek and Bulgarian. The main catalyst for this was, undoubtedly, the crusades. One should also note the significant differences between the developments of settlement systems in southern and northern Bulgaria, the two halves of the country being divided by the mighty Haemus Mountains. While northern Bulgaria was often

Издателство Полиграф, София 1999, с. 96-99.[Elena Kesiakova, Alexander Pijev, Stefan Shivachev. Book for Plovdiv. Poligraf Publishing, Sofia, 1999, p.96-99.]

⁵ Борис Борисов. 'Икономиката на средновековното селище върху селищната могила до с. Дядово, Бургаско', *Известия на музеите от Югоизточна България*. Брой XIV, Литера Принт, Стара Загора, 1991, с.л.68-88. [Boris Borisov. 'The economics of medieval settlement on the top of the settlement mound near village of Dyadovo, Burgas region'. *Proceedings of the Museums in Southeastern Bulgaria*, Volume XIV, Litera Print, Stara Zagora, 1991, pp.68-88].

⁶ Борис Борисов, *Средновековното село през 9-12 век на територията на днешна Югоизточна България*, 2005; Boris Borisov, *Medieval village during IX-XII century in today's South-East Bulgaria*. 2005, pp.334-348;

⁷ Boris Borisov . A study on the Medieval House from the 11th – 12th centuries in South-Eastern Bulgaria. *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, 1999, 2, pp. 83-92.

the target of barbarian raids by the Pechenegs, Uzes, and Cumans crossing the Danube, southern Bulgaria remained relatively calm and peaceful in close proximity to major Byzantine centers such as Philippopolis, Adrianople, and Constantinople.⁸ This situation, however, was disrupted by the passing crusaders, most notably those of the Third Crusade who conquered and established a lasting presence in Philippopolis and Beroe. Soon afterwards, the city of Constantia, located on the fertile plains along the banks of the river Maritza, disappeared completely. Frederick Barbarossa chose this city as his temporary residence on 21 January 1190, but it is not mentioned in a single written source after 1202.⁹ Despite the crusaders' foraging expeditions in the area, the end of this town was a result of actions taken by the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. Nikéas Choniates writes:

At that time [1201] John [the Bulgarian King Kaloyan] with great and terrible armed troops swept Misia, Constantia besieged and captured too easily this remarkable city in the Rhodope region. Once he had destroyed the fortified walls, he left the area.¹⁰

Archaeological data confirms Nikéas's account. Excavations in Constantia have been conducted almost every summer since 1959, led by Dimcho Aladjov and archaeologists from my home town museum in Haskovo, where I subsequently started my first job as an archaeologist.¹¹ The lead seals found in Constantia, eighteen in total, provide incontrovertible evidence of the exact moment that a once-flourishing city ceased to exist. The last dated seals belonged to Isaac II Comnenus (1203-1204) and the College of Judges of the Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople, dated to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries (Figure 12).¹² We will deal with the significance of Isaac's seal later in this chapter.

⁸ Victor Spinei. *The Romanians and the Turkic Nomads North of the Danube Delta from the Tenth to the Mid-Thirteenth Century*. Brill, Leiden, 2009, pp.124-128.

⁹ Magnus of Reichersberg. 'Chronicon Magni Presbiteri'. Wilhelm Wattenbach (ed) *MGHS XVII*, Hanover, 1861, pp. 476-534. English translation: G.A.Loud (trans). *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and related text*. Ashgate, Farnham, 2010, pp.149-169.

¹⁰ Niketas Choniates. 'History'. *FGHB*, Volume XI, Sofia, 1983, p.66. Retrieved from: http://macedonia.kroraia.com/gibi/11/gal/11_066.html. (Accessed: 09.05.2018). My English translation.

¹¹ Димчо Аладжов. *Прочути, забравени, неизвестни крепости от Хасковския край*. Мак-П, Хасково, 2001, стр. 52-59. [Dimcho Aladjov. *Famous, forgotten and unknown fortresses from Haskovo region*. Mak-P, Haskovo, 2001, pp. 52-59.]

¹² Васил Гюзелев. 'Средновековната българска крепост Констанция'. *ИИИМ*, София, кн.3, 1981, стр. 6-9. [Vasil Guyzelev. 'The medieval Bulgarian fortress Constantia'. *Proceedings of National Historical Museum*, vol.3, 1981, p. 6-9. See also: Ivan Yordanov. *Corpus of the Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria*, vol. III, part one and two. Sofia, 2009.]

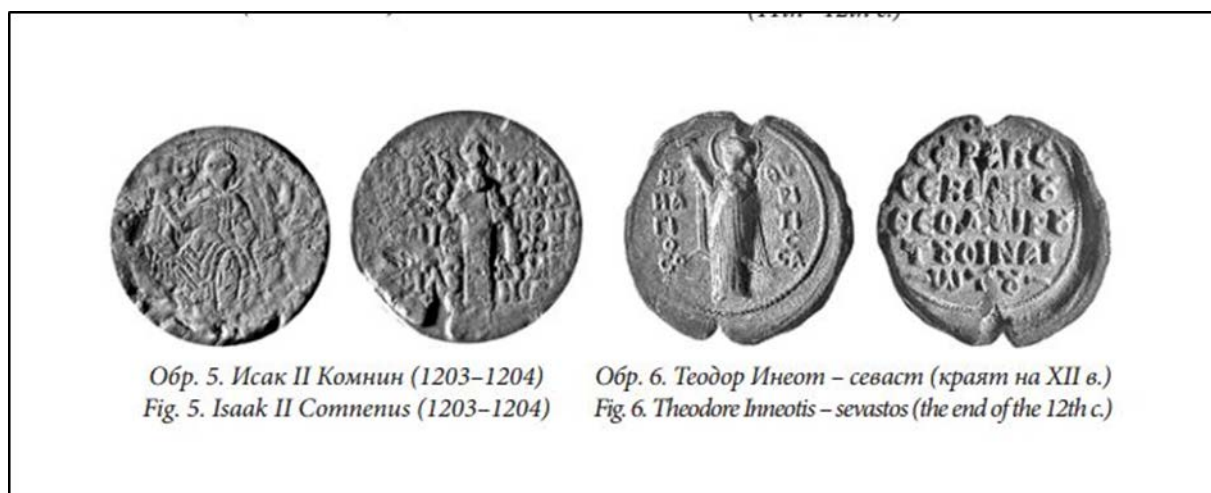


Figure 12. Lead seals from Constantia, late twelfth-early thirteenth century. Image: Ivan Yordanov

In the main time, if such a powerful and prosperous city could simply vanish without a trace, what about smaller settlements? The wars burned everything within the vicinity of Constantia to the ground once it was thoroughly pillaged. Dozens of settlements perished and their populations were driven into exile. Only fifteen years later, the knights of the Fourth Crusade once again turned their eyes toward these territories, granted to them by the Latin Emperors Baldwin I and Henry, and they conquered them without mercy. So fell Philippopolis, Stenimachos, Moniak, Lyutitza, and others. The territories surrounding every fortress were pillaged and razed, as they were a source of provisions for the armies – a fact that is well supported by archaeological data. A direct participant in the Third Crusade, Ansbert, describes the events in no uncertain terms: ‘You will not find a single inhabitant of a town or fortress between Philippopolis and Constantinople.’¹³ We have archaeological evidence that dozens of settlements within this territory ceased to exist at approximately the same very brief period of time, and if we compare that with the eyewitness testimony of Ansbert, we can safely say that the information from both sources checks out and can be assumed to be true. Southeastern Thrace at the time of the Third and Fourth Crusades had become a ghostland, where even the bravest feared to spend the night outside the thick stone walls of one of the few surviving fortresses. The Byzantine chronicler Nicephorus Gregoras writes:

The Macedonian and Thracian cities were completely ruined, having sustained, over a short period of time, many horrific invasions now by Latins, now by Bulgarians and Scythians. Was

¹³ Ansbert. ‘*Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*’, *FLHB*, p.266. Original Latin text: [‘Usque Constantinopolim a Philippopoli non invenitur civitatis vel castri habitator.']. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/3/gal/3_266.html. (Accessed 18.04.2018). My English translation.

there anything the Scythians, that bloodthirsty tribe, would not do to Christians in their inhumane mistreatment of them? And the Latins, far from being more moderate than the Scythians, outdid them in their atrocities. Not once, not twice, not thrice – many times it was the lot of these wretches to suffer the horrors of the raids of plunder by one people or another.¹⁴

As this text very aptly describes, devastation in the provinces of Macedonia and Thrace was total and ubiquitous. No less significant is the fact that the knights of the Fourth Crusade are identified as the principal agent of the devastation. Of course, we should not overlook the fact that Bulgarians and the Cumans were also involved in such devastating raids. The Cumans are referred as Scythians, but for the medieval Greek historians since the time of Herodotus the archaic term ‘Scythians’ long served as the epitome of savagery and barbarism for northern tribes.¹⁵ Thrace and Macedonia became a no man’s land, a scene of ceaseless battles, a territory that no one felt secure enough to stay in or defend. All of this caused the almost complete depopulation of huge swaths of land in the southeastern portions of the Balkan Peninsula.

There is yet another phenomenon worth mentioning: the abandoned settlements. These were places where life had suddenly stopped at roughly the same time, yet there are no visible traces of widespread fires, massacres, or plunder. This provides evidence that the wars between the Byzantine statelets, the Latin Empire, and the Bulgarian kingdom caused severe terror amongst the ordinary population, and many settlements were abandoned deliberately. Such was the case for the modern-day villages of Gledachevo, Iskritza, Galabovsko, and others.¹⁶ The Bulgarian kingdom, centred north of the Balkan Mountains, proved irresistibly attractive to the populations on the plains that would otherwise have been put to the sword.

¹⁴ Никифор Григора. *Римская История*. книга 5, С.Петербургской духовной академии, Департамента Типографий, Санкт Петербург 1862; [Nicephorus Gregoras. *Historia Byzantina*, *FGHB*, Volume XI, Sofia, 1983. Old Greek- Bulgarian bi-lingua. Retrived from: http://macedonia.kroraina.com/gibi/11/gal/11_126.html (Accessed 09.05.2018) (My translation); Original text with German translation: Nicephori Gregora. *Historia Romana*. ed. L. Schopen – I. Bekker(eds.). Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonn, 1829.

¹⁵ ‘At various times in the [Byzantine] historical narrative, the generic category of Scythians was applied to Huns, Gök -türks, Khazars, Avars, Bulgars, Hungarians, Pechenegs, Uzes, Cumans, Mongols and Tatars; the Anatolian Turks of the Seljuk period and Ottoman Turks could also be designated as Scythians. In the eleventh-fourteenth centuries, the category »Scythians« acquired a more restrictive sense as a designation of the northern nomads (Pechenegs, Cumans and the Golden Horde’s Mongols and Turks), as opposed to the »Persians« of Anatolia and Iran.’ Excerpt from: Rustam Shukurov. ‘The byzantine classification of the turks: Archaization or academic traditionalism?’. Asutay-Effenberger(ed.). *Philopation: Spaziergang im kaiserlichen Garten ; Schriften über Byzanz und seine Nachbarn ; Festschrift für Arne Effenberger zum 70 Geburtstag*, , Regensburg, 2013. pp 273–296 (284).

¹⁶ Борис Борисов. *Археологическата култура през периода на Византийското владичество в българските земи XI-XII век*, Културата на средновековна България, София, 2006; [Boris Borisov, *The archaeological culture during the Byzantine occupation in the Bulgarian lands XI-XII century*. Medieval Bulgarian Culture, Sofia, 2006.]

Archaeological data points to the emergence of ten new settlements in the modern-day Razgrad district, eleven new settlements in the Dobrich district, and twenty-seven new settlements in the Ruse district, all established in the early- to mid-thirteenth century.¹⁷ Perhaps this was because the areas in question were the most remote parts of the Bulgarian kingdom at the time, bordering on the Danube, which has always provided a significant natural barrier to the free movement of people between north and south. In these times, a new wave of settlers were also observed in the semi-mountainous and mountainous fortified settlements in the Balkan and Rhodope Mountains. Many of the Byzantine fortresses that had been abandoned after the fifth-sixth century were repopulated and their walls rebuilt and reinforced. Evidenced for this is via an abundance of archaeological data as well as an apparent hiatus in the cultural layers of the excavated fortresses, which sometimes reaches more than one metre in depth. Abandoned centuries before, these mountains once again began to be settled by a Bulgarian-Greek Orthodox population, quite probably due to the threat of the Third and Fourth Crusades.

The system of fortresses in southeastern Europe went through several stages in its development. From a strategic perspective, the Rhodope Mountains were important as they provided a direct link between the two strategic arteries: the Diagonal Road (Via Nostra Militaris) across the Upper Thracian Valley (connecting Singidunum, Serdica, Philippopolis, Adrianople, and Constantinople), and the Via Egnatia along the Aegean Coast (connecting Apollonia, Dirachium, Thessalonica, Philippi, Abdera, Kipsela, and Constantinople).¹⁸ The building of the fortification system of the Byzantine Empire in the Balkans took place between the fifth and the sixth centuries. It is known to have comprised three periods of large-scale construction and renovation under the reigns of the emperors Theodosius II (408-450), Anastasius (491-518) and Justinian (527-565).¹⁹ This was followed by a long period during which data concerning the human presence in these fortified settlements is rather sporadic. The fortresses ceased to function altogether between the seventh and tenth century. Excavations at

¹⁷ Борис Борисов. 'Демографските промени в днешните български земи през XI - XII в. (Археологически свидетелства)', *Сборник в чест на 70 годишнината на акад. Васил Гюзелев*, Издател: УИ "Св. Климент Охридски", София 2006, стр.71-84; Boris Borisov, 'Demographic changes in today's Bulgarian territory during XI-XII c. (Archaeological evidence). In: *Corpus for 70th anniversary of academic Vasil Guzelev*', University publisher 'St.Kliment Ohridski', Sofia, pp. 71-84; See also: Boris Borisov, Demographic and Ethnic Changes during XI - XII Century in Bulgaria. *Archaeologia Bulgariaca magazine*, Sofia, 2007, book 2, p.405-406.

¹⁸ Elena Koytcheva. 'Logistical Problems for the Movements for the early Crusades through the Balcan: Transport and Road Systems'. *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies: London, 21 – 26 August, 2006*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2006, p.54.

¹⁹ Велизар Велков. *Градът в Тракия и Дакия през късната античност (IV-VI в.)*. БАН, София, 1959. Velizar Velkov. *The city in Tracia and Dakia during the Late antiquity (IV-VI century)*. Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, 1959.

many fortresses, such as those at Beden, Smolyan, Okopa near Madjarovo, and Gluhite Kamani (Fraim), provide evidence of such a hiatus.²⁰

The devastation of the land as described in Greek and Slavonic written sources

Along with archaeological data relating to the impact of the Third and the Fourth Crusade on the settlement system and life in general in Byzantium and Bulgaria, additional information can be derived from Greek and Orthodox-Slavonic written sources. The attitude toward Western knights and their exploits in these sources is markedly negative. Having lost their Orthodox capital of Constantinople, Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Russians grieved the irreparable damage inflicted upon them by the crusaders. As we look at the impact of that Crusade on the settlement system of the Balkans, we see, in fact, the consequences of the capture and plunder of Constantinople. It would be naive to believe that after the mass killings, burning of churches, and looting of religious relics in Constantinople that the picture in smaller towns and population centres would be any different. As can be clearly seen from archaeological data, their situation was quite similar or even worse, because, although conquered and with its population decimated, Constantinople continued to exist whereas many smaller places simply disappeared entirely. A magnificent quotation in the 1280 *Eulogy of the Miracles of St. Demetrios* by Ioannes Stauracius distils this reality to a few words. The author, a priest and *chartophylax* (archivist) at St. Demetrios Church in Thessaloniki, writes that:

A great calamity befell the State of the Byzantines, for they angered God and broke God's law and neglected God's justice. This brought the Latin scourge upon us. And ultimately (O God's decisions!) fell the regal city, elevated, strong and proud, and its ruler turned into a true fugitive, wandering from place to place. Its treasures and wealth fell in to hands of foes; the Byzantine armies were robbed, dispersed, enervated; in one word, the State of the Byzantines was turning to ruin. And since the Byzantine soul was, so to say, extinguished, the whole body of settlements was put to death.²¹

²⁰ Дамян Дамянов. 'Ранновизантийска и средовековна българска крепост при с.Беден, Средни Родопи', *Laurea*. In honorem Margaritae Vaklinova. София, 2009, кн. 1, сл 111-128л Damyan Damyanov. 'Early Byzantine medieval fortress near Beden village in Rhodopi Moutntain'. *Laurea*. In honorem Margaritae Vaklinova, Sofia, 2009, book 1, p.111-128. Дамян Дамянов, Н. Бояджиев. Археологически проучвания на крепостта Турлук при гр. Смолян. *Археологически открития и разкопки през 2006 г.*, АОР 2007, София, с. 279-282. Damyan Damyanov, N.Boyadjiev. Archaeological research of fortress Turluk near Smolyan 2006, *Archaeological researches and discoveries 2007*. Sofia, pp. 279-282.

²¹ Йоан Ставрикий. 'Похвално слово за чудесата на Великия Мироточец Св.Димитър' *ГИБИ*, том 10(XXIII), 1980, стр.128.[Ioannes Stauracius. 'Oratio Laudatoria de Sancti Myroblytae Demetrii Miraculis', F. Halkin (ed.). *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca* (1957). Auctarium BGH, Bruxelles, 1968, p 58-59]. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/10/gal/10_128.html. Greek-Bulgarian bi-lingua.(Accessed 30.04.2018). My English translation.

Alongside the usual self-accusations of sin that was so characteristic of the age, this source reveals the plight of the once great Byzantine Empire, whose emperor was forced to wander ignominiously from place to place. It mentions lost treasures, by which it most likely means not just gold and silver but stolen church relics. The entire organism of the Byzantine Empire from the head (Constantinople) to the body (settlements) was killed by the 'Latin scourge'. This quote is unambiguous and directly correlates with the data about the destruction of smaller thirteenth-century settlements yielded by archaeological excavations.

Data concerning destroyed or abandoned settlements including Dyadovo, Ezero, Znamenets, Gipsovo, Iskritza, P. Gradets, Gledachevo, Iskritza, Galabovsko, and Krum, are telling. To facilitate the reader, Map 1, based on archaeological data, shows the extinct settlements (Figure 13). Through this map, we can see the all-round devastation between Veroi and Adrianople. This area was well researched by my colleague Boris Borisov over the last three decades. Due to the establishment of a large open mining facility 'Maritza Iztok', ubiquitous archaeological excavations were carried out to preserve the historical heritage of this region.²²

²² 'Archaeological Wealth from Mini Maritza Iztok EAD'. Website of coal mine company. Retrieved from: http://previous.marica-iztok.com/en/archaeology_gallery.php. Accessed (13.05.2018).

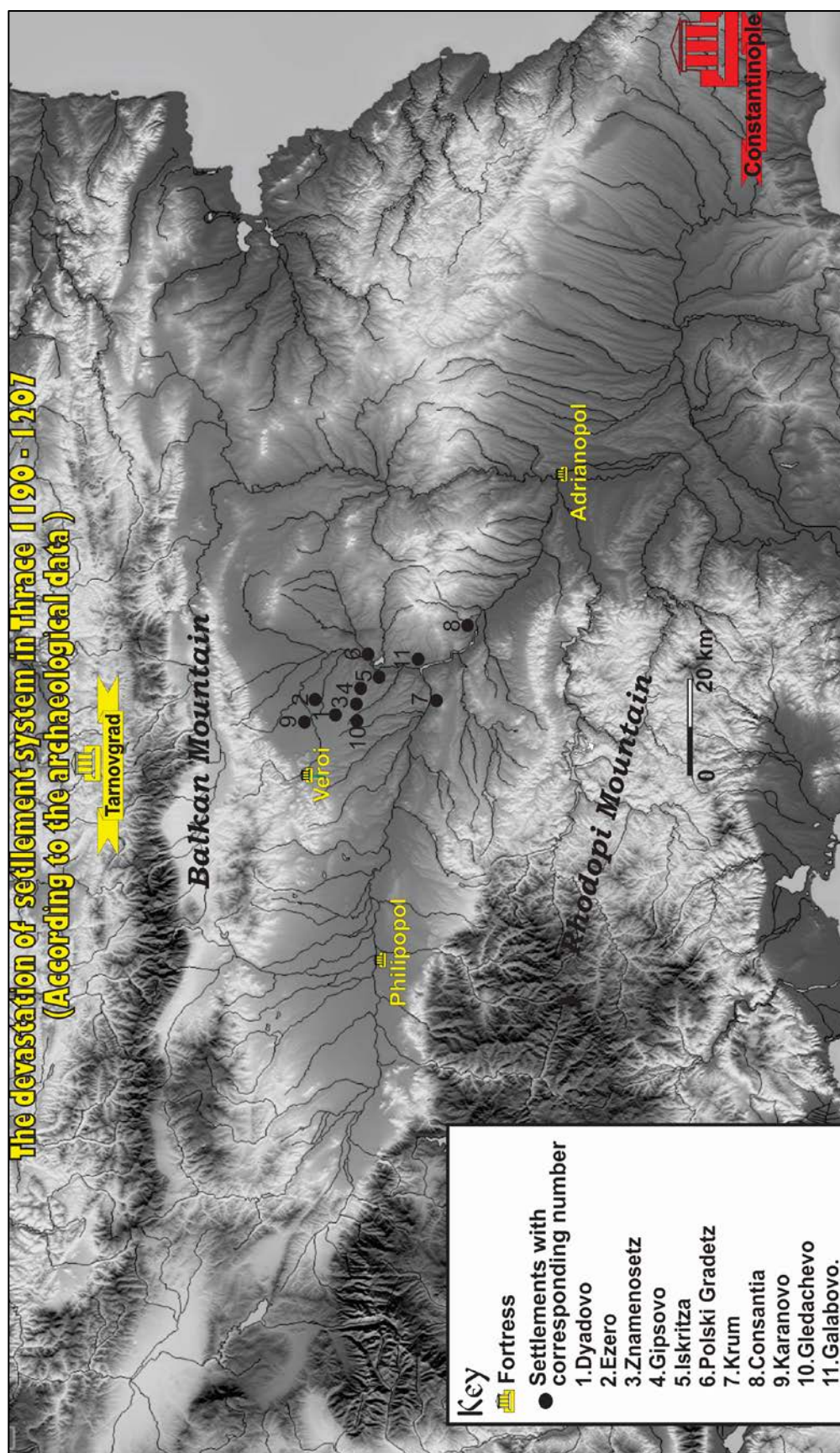


Figure 13. Map.1. The destroyed and abandoned settlements in Thrace due to the Third and the Fourth Crusade and the wars between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire. Created by Angel Trendafilov.

It would be one-sided to attribute all this destruction to the crusaders alone. Taking advantage of the situation, the Bulgarian king Kaloyan invaded the Byzantine lands south of the Balkan Mountains, sowing death and destruction in his wake. In the very next paragraph of the *Eulogy*, Ioannes explains:

Certain rulers crawled out of their holes like some beasts from underground and began to bark against the land of Byzantium, to attack, to plunder and to bite just like Gavel and Ammon had done against the children of Israel. And then every people rose in its entirety as he had heretofore been called when the ruler of the Bulgarians was John or Johanitza, as some call him even now. And he waged war on the Byzantines and met with no resistance, as he crossed all of Macedonia, wiping out settlements, destroying fortresses and razing them to the ground. He took prisoner, plundered and resettled the entire population, bringing it into the neighbourhood of the River Istrum [Danube]. Put simply, he turned into desert every piece of land that he attacked.²³

The above two quotes once again suggest that the Fourth Crusade and the wars and strife that followed throughout the Balkans brought complete and total ruin to fortresses and settlements. The second quote also confirms the re-settling of large amounts of people and the establishment of new settlements between the Balkan Mountains and the Danube, which is demonstrated by the archaeological research above. Even the knights of the Fourth Crusade noticed the mass migration caused by these wars. In a letter to his brother Gottfried, dated September 1205, Emperor Henry writes:

After that [the capture of the City of Philippopolis by Kaloyan] [he] drove all people of low birth, men and women, to his country, razed the city to the ground and then set off with an army of 100,000 men, mostly Vlachs and Cumanians. And those, who have respect for no law, are even lower than the Saracens.²⁴

²³ Йоан Ставрикий. 'Похвално слово за чудесата на Великия Мироточец Св.Димитър'. *ГИБИ*, том 10(XXIII), 1980, стр.129. [Ioannes Stauracius. 'Oratio Laudatoria de Sancti Myroblytae Demetrii Miraculis'. F. Halkin (ed.). *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca* (1957). Auctarium BGH, Bruxelles 1968, p 58-59]. Retrived from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/10/gal/10_129.html. (Accessed 09.04.2018). My English translation.

²⁴ Henry of Flanders. 'Letter to Gottfried from 1205'. J. Longnon. 'La campagne de Henri Hainaut en Asie Mineure en 1211'. *Bulletin L'Academie Royale de Belgique*, vol. 34, 1948. Original Latin text :['Deinde omnes plebeios tam masculos quam feminas in terram suam mittens, civitatem funditus subvertit, et Paulo post cum 100 000 hominum et eo amplius, ut pote Blacorum et Commannorum, qui cum omni lege careant, Sarracenis deteriores sunt...']. pp.442-452. (My English translation).

In addition to the evidence of wholesale devastation is again the mass displacement of peoples ‘to his country’, which refers to Kaloyans’ capitol and the undisputed territories in northern Bulgaria.

The opposite phenomenon is also registered: once-abandoned fortresses suddenly became attractive because of their strategic mountainous location and their ability to offer shelter or serve as a refuge. George Akropolites writes about the conquests of the Bulgarian kingdom in the mid-thirteenth century:

Immediately conquered were Stenimachos [Stanimak], Perushtitza, Krichim, Tzepina and everything within Achridos except Mneachos [Moniak], which alone remained in the hands of the Romioi. Subjugated by the Bulgarians were also Ustra, Perperikon, Krivus and the town, located near Adrianople, called Ephraim [Fraim].²⁵

These fortresses served as suitable topographic landmarks for the enormous territories that found themselves engulfed in the battles between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire. Map 2, based on the written sources above, shows the location of these fortresses of interest (Figure 14).

²⁵ Georgius Acropolita. ‘Historia’. *Fontes Graeci Historiae Bulgaricae*. Volume VIII, Sofia, 1972, Old Greek – Bulgarian bi-lingua, p.183-184. [Георги Акрополит. ‘История’, Михаил Войнов, Василка Тъпкова-Займова, Любомир Йончев (ед.), *Гръцки Извори за Българската История*, VIII, София, 1972, стр. 183 – 184]. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/gibi/8/gal/8_183.html. (Accessed: 09.05.2018). My English translation.

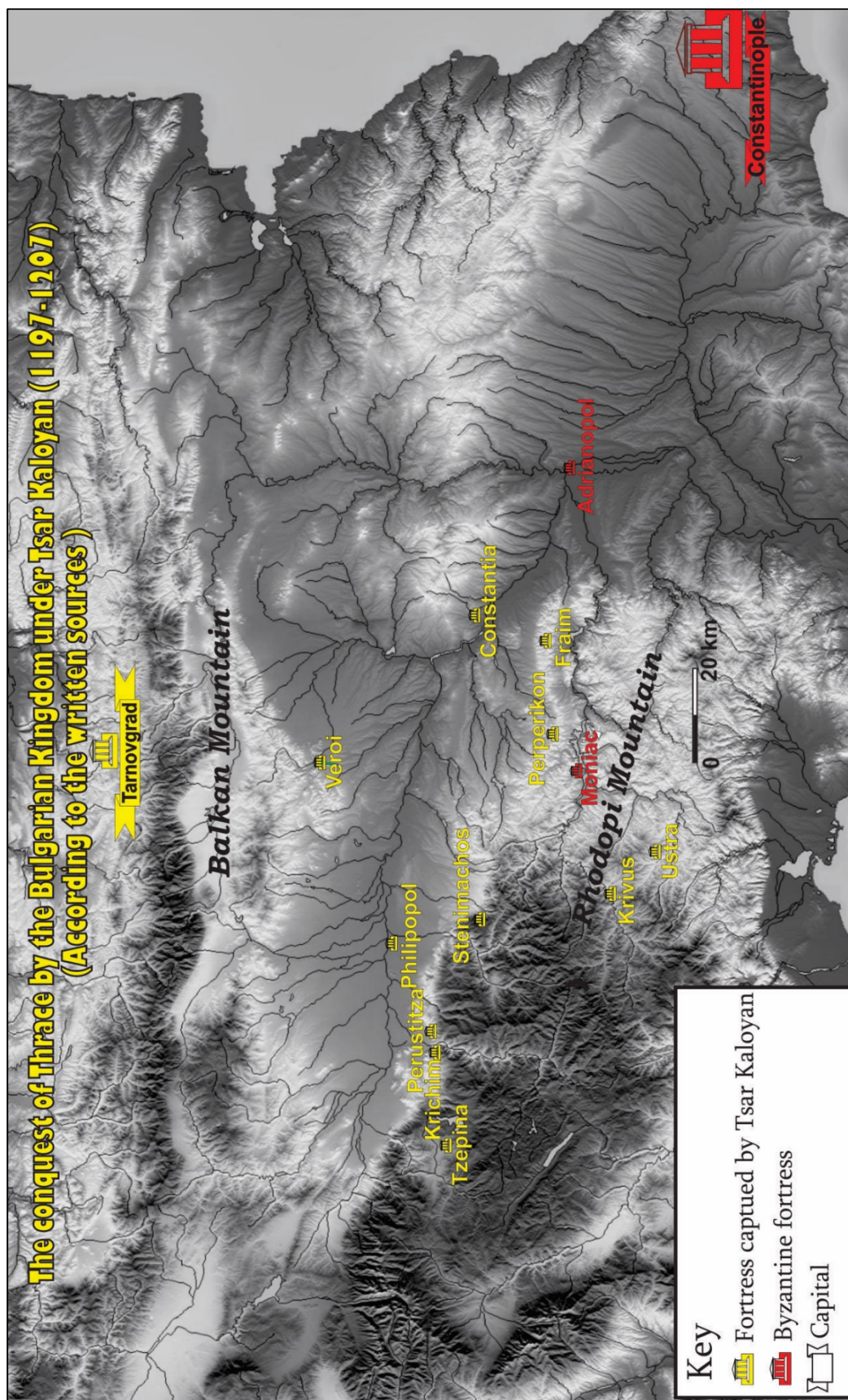


Figure 14. Map 2. The conquest of Thrace by Tsar Kaloyan, based on information from George Akropolites, the letters of Henry of Flanders and Ioannes Stauracius. Created by Angel Trendafilov.

Although mentioned as Bulgarian, these fortresses did not actually constitute part of the permanent territory of the Bulgarian kingdom, which in these days lay to the north of the Balkan range. However, the lasting presence south of Balkan Mountains of Bulgarian armies under Kaloyan makes it hard to determine who should take more credit for the devastation of these cities. While Byzantine authors place the blame on the crusaders and Bulgarians, Slavonic written sources view these events from a totally different perspective.

The literature of this period was comprised mostly of hagiographic sources, chronicles, and annotated transcripts of older texts. Along with deeply religious suggestions and mythologised characters of saints and kings, these Orthodox-Slavonic sources sometimes include priceless information about the Third and the Fourth Crusade. The interpretation of this information is extremely important for a comprehensive and fair evaluation of the period. For example, one slightly different viewpoint on the devastation of the former Byzantine territories held by the Latin Empire is provided by the thirteenth-century Serbian writer, Theodosius, in his *Life of St. Sava*. The manuscript dates from the 13th century:

Kaloyan, tsar of Zagora, did rise and destroy many a Greek city across all of Thrace and Macedonia, Franks ruled then at the City of Constantine that they held, and grieved not for the destruction of other cities, because they did not hold them as their own. He did find them empty and sapped and did sack them. Came he with great hosts as did in times yore Sennacherib against city of Lord.²⁶

Having conquered more land than they could rule successfully, the knights of the Fourth Crusade effectively condemned to anarchy large swathes of the former Byzantine Empire. As Emperor Henry writes in a letter to his brother Godfrey of Hainaut (located in Europe) asking for help in September 1206:

And though God in his miraculous way handed us the Roman Empire, we cannot keep and protect it without advice and help from our friends.... On a positive note, with 600 knights and

²⁶ Theodosius. 'Life of St. Sava '. Snezhana Rakova, *FCHMEOS*, 2013, pp. 61-62.

10,000 sergeants in the whole Empire of Romania and with God's help we would protect the cause of our Lord.²⁷

The absence of central authority created the kind of vacuum that was to be filled in the worst possible way: through battles and incursions by assorted armies that did not see these territories as their own. Even the crusaders undertook punitive expeditions in southern Thrace and the Rhodope Mountains, but they quickly retreated to the security of the fortress walls at Adrianople and Constantinople.

The anarchy and devastation in these territories were so great that the indigenous population was forced to drastically adapt, abandoning the lands of their forefathers to seek refuge in the mountains far to the north – a change supported by archaeological data. Further information on this period can be found in the Serbian text, *The life of St. Simeon Nemanja*, by Dometian. This hagiographic text was written three years after Manuel II reconquered Constantinople from the Latins.²⁸ The author was on a journey from Mount Athos on the eponymous Athos Peninsula, a place thick with Orthodox monasteries and revered as second Jerusalem by Orthodox Christians, to his native Serbia via Thessaloniki, southwestern Bulgaria, and modern-day Macedonia. One can suppose with some degree of certainty that he saw the devastation that he describes:

With the coming of foreign tribes the land of the holy father's father did become desolate and what the most blessed one had gathered from all lands fell to plunder, some fell to weapons, and other were taken captive, yet others were deprived of all their property and fell to bodily infirmity. And with divine help this extermination passed, yet did another invader come thereafter, called Hunger, more powerful than the previous, and Godbearer effected a new captivity, stronger than the previous, and spared not our kith, shooting without arrows and stabbing without spear and cutting without sword and smiting without mace, and, to put it simply chased without legs, caught without arms, slew without knife and kill without armament yet left so many dead....²⁹

²⁷ Henry of Flanders. 'Letter to Godfrey of Hainaut from September 1206'. *FLHB*. Corpus IV, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1981, pp. 12. Original Latin text: ['Et quia non minor est virtis quam querere parta tueri, licet Deus miraculose nobis tradiderit imperium Romanum, non tamen illud possumus absque consilio et auxilio amicorum nostrorum conservare[....] scuturi pro certo quod cum sexcentis militibus et decem 000 serjantorum per univsum Romanie imperium divino mediante subsidio, negotium Dei procul dubio plenarie promoveremus...']. Retrieved from: http://www.promacedonia.org/libi/4/gal/4_012.html. (Accessed 01.05.2018). My English translation.

²⁸ Б.Даничий. *Животи светоза Симеона и светоз Сава*. Београд 1865, стр.98-99.[B. Danichii *The life of St.Simeon and St.Sava*. Beograd, 1865, p.98-99.]

²⁹ Dometian. 'The life of St.Simeon – Nemanja'. Snezhana Rakova. *FCHMEOS*, 2013, page 76.

In addition to providing information concerning battles and captured and displaced people, this text accentuates the impact of these hostilities by emphasising the famine, which is described as a bigger cause of death than the war itself. Thus, the picture of the epoch is painted in even more vivid colour through eyewitness and contemporary accounts of the events. More importantly, after a careful comparison of the written sources with the available archaeological evidence, we are more likely to be able to explain why such an enormous number of settlements and fortresses in Thrace ceased to exist. The emergence of new settlements to the north is also convincingly corroborated from these sources of evidence. The devastation and forced migration reported by these witnesses are substantiated by data from archaeological explorations of the sites in question. This is an important occurrence since it conveys additional, indirect information that it substantiates the veracity of the written sources, which is important and valuable for all scholars.

Archaeological evidence for the crusaders' presence

Discoveries made at sites throughout western Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Serbia come as evidence that the dramatic events of the period did not spare these lands, however remote they were from Constantinople. The passage of the Third Crusade and the military campaigns of Emperor Henry left traces, including swords, helmets, daggers, spurs, and other Western military gear. But there is no thorough study on the subject or has there been any attempt at a systematic review of the artefacts dating from this period in Bulgaria. As the author of a major research work on mediaeval armaments in southeastern Europe has put it: 'The swords from twelfth-fifteenth century from Bulgaria are not included in any comprehensive work although many authors published and analysed this material'.³⁰

Swords with Western origin are undoubtedly interesting finds and two have been found at the Pernik fortress in western Bulgaria, one with a Latin inscription. In addition, there is a fragment of a shield, a ceremonial dagger, a silver cross, parts of a suit of chain mail, a helmet, and spurs from this same fortress (Figure 15 and Figure 16).³¹

³⁰ Marko Aleksic. *Medieval swords from Southeastern Europe: Material from 12th to 15th century*. Dedraplast, Belgrade, 2007, p.8. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/496513/Mediaeval_Swords_from_Southeastern_Europe._Material_from_12th_to_15th_Century_2007_by_Marko_Aleksi%C4%87 . (Accessed 01.05.2018).

³¹ Йорданка Чангова. *Перник*, том 3. Българска академия на науките, София 1992, стр.167. Yordanka Changova. *Pernik*, volume 3. Bulgarian academy of science, Sofia, 1992, pp.166-169(167).



Figure 15. Helmet and chain-mail protective gear from Pernik fortress, late twelfth – early thirteenth century.Image: Yordanka Changova.



Figure 16. Helmet and protective gear from Pernik fortress, late twelfth – early thirteenth century.

The first sword certainly had a nobleman for an owner. It was found in the ruins of the fortress.³² The filigree inscription on this sword says: ‘+ IHININlhVILPIDHINlhVILPN +’ (Figure 17).

³² The sword is kept at the Bulgarian National Museum of Archaeology in Sofia, inventory No. 2044.

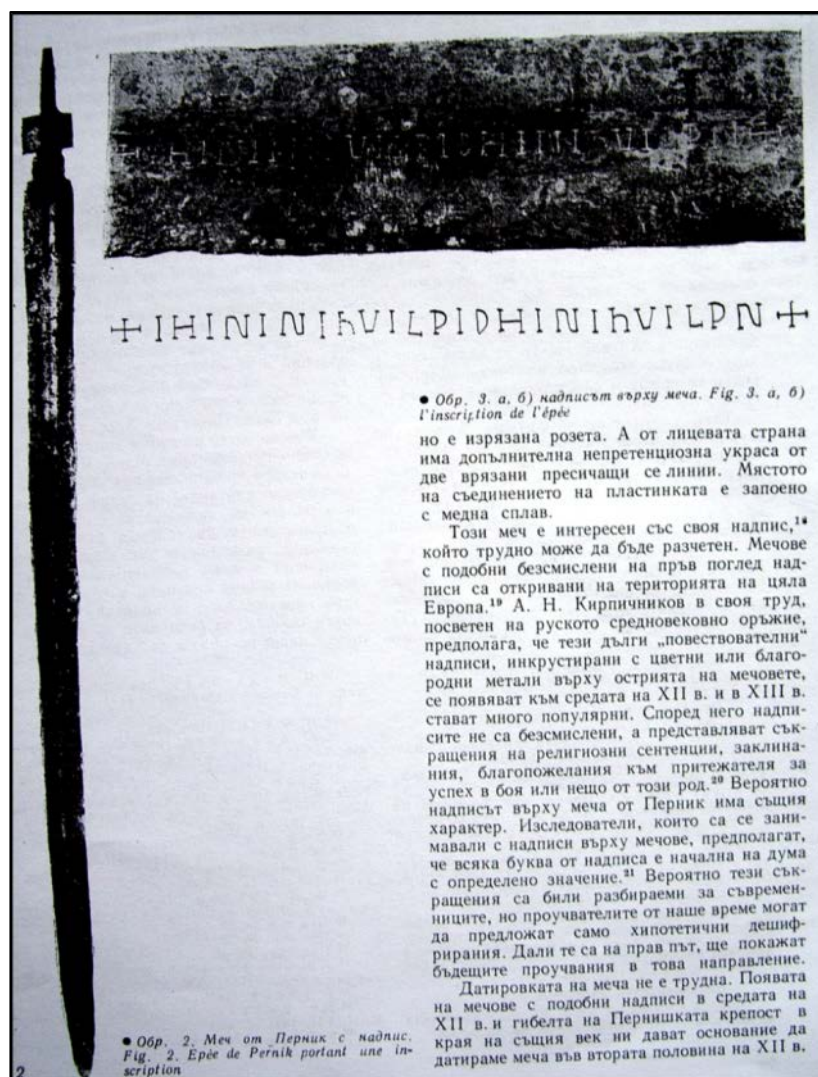


Figure 17. Sword from Pernik fortress with inscription, late twelfth – early thirteenth century.
Image: Irina Shtereva

The sword was made in the twelfth century and probably relates to the Third Crusade. St. Mihailov proposed the following interpretation of the inscription: IH(ESUS). IN I(HESUS) N(OMINE). IH(ESUS) VI(RGO). L(AUS) P(ATRIS) I(HESUS) D(OMINI) H(RISTUS). IN IH(ESUS) VI(RGO). L(AUS) P(ATRIS) N(OSTRIS), or 'Jesus. In the Name of Jesus the Virtuous. Glory to God, Our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Name of Jesus the Virtuous. Glory to our Father'.³³ The letters, twenty-four in number, are carved with a fine chisel and inlaid with silver filigree that has been made flush with the surrounding surface. The sword can be dated

³³ St. Mihailov. Nadpisat na latinski ezik varhu mecha ot Perniskata krepot, *Archaeologia magazine*, 1985, Sofia, vol. 3, p.46. Йорданка Чангова, *Перник*, том 3, стр.167; [Yordanka Changova. *Pernik*, volume 3, p. 167].

with a high degree of certainty to somewhere in the mid-twelfth century, when such swords first emerged.

The second sword, also dating from the twelfth century and numbered 3693, is preserved in perfect condition but bears no inscription (Figure 18).³⁴



Figure 18. Sword number 3693 (larger item in the foreground) with western spurs and spears from Pernik fortress, late twelfth – early thirteenth century. Image: Pernik Historical Museum.

It was found in building No. 54, a two-storey structure located towards the middle of the fortress, some 50 meters from the gate. Unearthed at the same site with it were a silver cross, an iron helmet of conical shape, metal vessels, and bits of pottery. Archaeologists tend to attribute a higher social status to the dwellers of the building.³⁵ Its very location and the artefacts found inside indicate a settled lifestyle since these objects did not end up there by

³⁴ Анатолий Кирпичников. 'Надписи и знаки на клинках восточноевропейских мечей IX-XIII вв'. *Międzynarodowy kongres archeologii słowiańskiej*, V.Wroclaw-Warszawa-Krakow, 1970, стр.341. [Anatoly [Kirpichnikov. 'Inscriptions and signs at the blades of the eastern European swords IX-XIII century. *International congress of Slavic archaeology*, V.Wroclaw-Warszawa-Krakow, 1970, p.341].

³⁵ Константин Касабов. 'Допълнение към типологизирането на меч №3693 от Пернишката крепост', *Бюлетин на Регионалния исторически музей Перник*. Фабер Публишерс, В.Търново, 2014, стр.235 – 241. [KonstantinKasabov. 'Addition to definition of sword № 3693 from the Pernik fortress'. *Bulletin of regional museum of History – Pernik*. Faber Publishers, V.Tarnovo, 2014, page 235-241].

chance or as a result of armed hostilities. The sword was located in a closed compound together with many other artefacts, which facilitated the dating process.³⁶ According to the typological system of A. N. Kirpichnikov, the sword can be placed somewhere in the twelfth-thirteenth century. Similar swords have also been found in western Europe, which helps confirm the dating.³⁷ Here, too, the possible time frame for the manufacture of the sword ends with the seizure and razing of the Pernik fortress in 1190. The spurs found in the Pernik fortress are of the tapered type, with double notches at the tip, dating them toward the twelfth century. The spurs are a sure sign of a Western presence as they were not used in eastern armies at that time.³⁸ In all probability, the latest possible date of manufacture for these items is sometime before the fall of the Pernik fortress in 1190. In that year, immediately after the passage of the Third Crusade through Pernik, the Serbian Grand Župan Stefan Nemanja invaded the valley of the River Struma and successfully captured a number of Bulgarian cities, then under Byzantine rule, including Pernik, Zemen, Skopje, and Prizren.³⁹ The Pernik fortress was never rebuilt or repopulated. Instead, a poor, unfortified settlement emerged nearby. The iron helmet and the two swords found in the ruins of the fortress are yet more evidence to support the theory that this site was inhabited by crusaders. It is possible that the fortress was captured by the knights of the Third Crusade or abandoned by its local inhabitants and subsequently occupied by crusaders. After the departure of Frederick Barbarossa's army, Stefan Nemanja possibly took advantage of the situation and annexed Pernik to his kingdom.

Many parallels can be drawn between these swords and preserved items with western provenance dating from the same period.⁴⁰ But there is even more precise information that can be derived from these swords. Thanks to archaeology and its methods, we can even determine the country of origin for these weapons and the nationality of their bearers. According to research by Konstantin Kasabov, published in 2012, the sword N 3693 from Pernik fortress is

³⁶ Ирина Щерева 'Към въпроса за мечовете в Средновековна България'. *списание Археология*, 1975, книжка 2 София, стр.56. [Irina Shtereva. 'To the question about the swords in Medieval Bulgaria'. *Archaeologia magazine*, book 2, 1975, Sofia, page 56].

³⁷ Anatoly Kirpichnikov. 'Inscriptions and signs on the blades of the eastern European swords IX-XIII century'. p.341.

³⁸ Eric Christiansen. *The Norsemen in the Viking age*. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2002, p. 175.

³⁹ Жељко Фајфрић *Света лоза Стефана Немање*. Издавачи: ДД "Графосрем" и Српска православна заједница, Шид, 1998, стр.9.; Zhelko Fayfrich. *The holy vine of Stefan Nemanja*. Grafosrem publishers and Serbian Orthodox Unity, Sid, 1998. p.9.

⁴⁰ Examples of similar helmets with bent to front side peak can be seen on the works of art showing warriors with Western origin. See: B Gray. 'A Fatimid Drawing', *The British Museum Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No 3 (Jun., 1938), p. 92. David Nicolle. 'The monreale capitals and the military equipment of Later Norman Sicily', *Gladius*, XV, 1980, pp.87-103, figs. 4, 13.

type XIa under the classification of Oakeshott and type 8 under the classification of Geibig.⁴¹ These are types of Western-style swords and examples of the same type are found at the Royal Armouries, Leeds (IX.1082), the Museum of Ethnology and Archaeology at Cambridge, and in Schatzkammer, Vienna: the famous ‘Sword of saint Maurice’.⁴² The latest research by Stanimir Dimitrov and Deyan Rabovyanov also proves the Western origin of the two swords, the helmet, and the dagger with decorated sheath from Pernik fortress. They have determined that Italy is their place of origin.⁴³ Therefore, these weapons may have been obtained by participants of the Third Crusade or their owners may have been from an Italian city-state.

There was a joint military expedition of the Bulgarian king Boril and Emperor Henry against Serbia in 1214.⁴⁴ The expedition passed Pernik and ended in the Serbian town of Nis around 120 km to the west. Armed with this information, we can trace these artefacts to the Latin Empire and its Venetian core. At the time of the expedition, Pernik fortress was not inhabited and it is likely to have been used as shelter for the joint Bulgarian-Latin army. Whichever of these two hypotheses is more plausible is hard to say, because the type of swords used by the crusaders did not change significantly in this period. However, thanks to archaeology, we are able to look deeper into the past to refine the history and create new theories supported by strong evidence.

Traces of diplomacy

Another group of artefacts that originate directly from the knights of the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire have stirred particular interest: lead seals used in securing official correspondence between rulers. The importance of these artefacts is significant. First, they bear the name and/or the image of their owner as a proof of authenticity. All of these seals were either issued by a Latin Empire or a Byzantine emperor. Second, they provide evidence of often

⁴¹ Ewart Oakeshott. *The Swords in the Age of Chivalry*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2006, page 113. See also: Christopher L. Miller. ‘*The Sword Typology of Alfred Geibig*’. [www.myarmory.com](http://myarmory.com/feature_geibig.html). Retrieved from: http://myarmory.com/feature_geibig.html. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

⁴² Константин Касабов. ‘Допълнение към типологизирането на меч №3693 от Пернишката крепост’. *Електронен вестник за музеология и военна история*. брой 1, 2012. [Konstantin Kasabov. ‘Addition of a typology of sword N3693 from Pernik fortress’ *E-newspaper for museology and military history*. issue 1, 2012]. Retrieved from: http://www.militarymuseum.bg/Pages/Publications/Electronic%20journal/broeve/2012_01.pdf. (Accessed 01.05.2018).

⁴³ Dimitrov Stanimir and Deyan Rabovyanov. ‘Arms and armour from the time of Asenevtsi uprising in the light of archaeological materials from the fortress of Pernik’. *The Great Asenevtsi*. Abagar, Veliko Tarnovo, 2016, pp.345-356.

⁴⁴ Alexandru Madgearu. *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire 1185–1280*. 2017, p.190.

unidentified epistolary activity between royals. And third, they can provide proof that a letter reached or did not reach its destination, which makes the location of the find crucial. Excavations in Bulgaria have so far yielded four such seals that once belonged to Latin Emperors. Two of those were found in the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, the city of Tarnovgrad, the third was unearthed in the vicinity of Popovo, a town some 70 kilometers from the ancient capital, and the fourth was likewise discovered in Northern Bulgaria, in the city of Pleven. One seal belonged to Emperor Henry of Flanders (1205–1216) – the one discovered in 1986 at the old Bulgarian capitol Veliko Tarnovo within the inner fortress of Tzarevetz at Tarnovgrad (Figure 19).⁴⁵



Figure 19. Lead seal of Emperor Henry of Flanders found in Veliko Tarnova inner citadel. Image: Deyan Rabovyanov.

Another seal depicted Emperor Robert, of Courtenay (1221–1228) was discovered in 1978 also within the inner fortress of Tzarevetz (Figure 20).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ivan Yordanov. *Corpus of Byzantine seals from Bulgaria*. Vol. 3, Part 1, Sofia, 2009, no. 202.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 203.



Figure 20. Lead seal of Emperor Robert of Courtenay (1221-1228) found in the Tarnovgrad inner citadel. Image: Deyan Rabovyanov.

Two seals belonged to Emperor Baldwin II of Constantinople (1228–1261), with one discovered near Popovo, 70 km from Tarnovgrad (Veliko Tarnovo), in 2014 (Figure 21) and the other in a mediaeval fortress near Pleven in 1984.⁴⁷ The fifth lead seal found in Thermae (La Ferme) is also Latin, but it is damaged and will be discussed in the next chapter.



Figure 21. Lead seal of Emperor Baldwin II from Popove. Image: Deyan Rabovyanov.

⁴⁷ Николай, Кънев, Константин Тотев. 'Новооткрит оловен печат на латинския император Бодуен Втори'. *България в европейската култура, наука, образование, религия*. Т. 1, Университетско издателство "Епископ Константин Преславски", Шумен, 2015, с. 374-380. [Nikolay Kanev, Konstantin Totev. 'Newfound lead seal of Latin Emperor Boduen II'. *Bulgaria whithin European culture, science, education, religion*. Vol.1, University publishing 'Episkop Konstantin Preslavski, Shumen, 2015, pp.374-380.]

Though few in number, these seals are significant from a scholarly perspective in that they demonstrate that, in addition to armed force, the knights of the Fourth Crusade also used diplomacy to communicate with the Bulgarian kingdom. The location of these four discoveries north of the Balkan Mountains is no accident. This was the heartland of the Bulgarian kingdom, while control of the the Thracian Valley to the south of the mountains had always been disputed, initially between Bulgaria and Byzantium and, later, between Bulgaria and the Latin Empire. Two seals were discovered in excavations within the inner fortress of Tarnovgrad, a fact that strongly suggests that the addressees of the correspondence were the Bulgarian kings Boril (1207-1218) and Ivan Asen II (1218-1241). Despite a history of clashes on the battlefield, the warring parties would rather arrange dynastic marriages than break the fragile peace reached between them. In 1213, Boril married his adopted daughter to Emperor Henry. The match was originally proposed by the Latin barons who, by this act, recognised the Bulgarian kingdom as an independent state.⁴⁸ Perhaps the seal in question was part of the correspondence exchanged to arrange this dynastic marriage. Meanwhile, Ivan Asen II was one of the most successful Bulgarian kings of all time. During his long reign, he both laid siege to Constantinople and concluded alliances with the Latins against the Empire of Nicaea. It is, therefore, no wonder that a seal of a Latin Emperor dated to the reign of Ivan Asen II was discovered in the latter's capital. Similarly, Pleven was a major Bulgarian fortress north of the Balkan Mountains, so the discovery of an imperial seal there should come as no surprise. The seal found near the town of Popovo, however, located some 70 kilometers from the then capital city of Tarnovgrad (Veliko Tarnovo) is more problematic. We can only speculate that, for some reason, the letter to which this seal had been affixed either failed to reach its addressee or that Ivan Asen II was in the area when the letter reached him. The number of these artefacts is also indicative of the fact that, despite an existence of fifty-seven years, only five Latin seals have been discovered in Bulgaria while there are dozens of Greek seals dating from the same period. These provide evidence of brisk bilateral correspondence between Bulgaria and the Greek statelets at both the state and Church level.⁴⁹ It seems, after all, that the sword was the preferred means of communication between the Bulgarian kingdom and the Latin Empire.

⁴⁸ Kenneth M. Setton, Robert Lee Wolff, Harry W. Hazard (eds.). *A History of the Crusades, Volume II: The Later Crusades, 1189-1311*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 2006, p. 210.

⁴⁹ Ivan Yordanov. *Corpus of Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria*. Volume 1: Byzantine Seals with Geographical Names. Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia 2003. See also: Ivan Yordanov. *Corpus of Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria*. Volume 2: Byzantine Seals with Family Names. Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, 2006. Ivan Yordanov. *Corpus of the Byzantine Seals from Bulgaria*. Volume 3: Seals of

The lead seal of the Byzantine Emperor Isaac II Angelos found in Constantia, mentioned earlier in this chapter (Figure 12) as evidence of important correspondence between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria, was made public for the first time in 2014.⁵⁰ This seal is dated toward the second brief period of rule for Isaac II, from July 1203 to January 1204. Isaac II Angelos was released from prison after the arrival of the crusaders and placed on the Byzantine throne. His second reign was a desperate attempt to restore confidence to the large crusader army outside the city, to which he and his co-emperor and son, Alexius IV, owed enormous sums of money and were unlikely to repay. Thus, the situation of the two co-Emperors was very unstable. The discovery of such a seal from an emperor who spent a mere six months on the throne is a significant archaeological discovery. The location where that seal was found, deep within Bulgarian territory, raises fresh questions while also shining light on the months that immediately preceded the fall of Constantinople on April 13, 1204 to the crusaders. Notably, there was no official Byzantine envoy in Constantia at this time to whom Isaac could have written a letter. Indeed, the city had been annexed by Bulgaria in late 1201-early 1202 and was completely depopulated. Thus, there could have been no other recipient of such a letter of suitable stature but the Bulgarian king Kaloyan. Probably the fortress of Constantia had provided shelter during the military campaigns mounted by the Bulgarian army, so that was where Kaloyan received the letter. Perhaps the tense situation in Constantinople and the inability of Isaac and Alexius IV Angelos to repay the crusaders prompted the Byzantine emperor to turn to Kaloyan for help.

No less important is the fact that Isaac II Angelos knew Kaloyan personally and may have communicated with him face-to-face during his first reign as emperor of Byzantium (1185-1195). At that time, the young Kaloyan was a Byzantine hostage and spent two years in Constantinople, leaving in 1189.⁵¹ It can be assumed that, during this time, Isaac II Angelos did interact with his Bulgarian hostage. It is similarly likely that the letter in question was a plea for help and a proposal for an alliance against the crusaders. A showdown between Kaloyan and the crusaders, brought about by some artful Byzantine diplomacy, could certainly have resolved the emperor's predicament by removing the foreign troops from Constantinople

Byzantine Institutions (Secular and Ecclesiastical) from the Capital Constantinople. Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia 2009.

⁵⁰ Иван Йорданов. Средновековният град Констанция (IV—XIII в.). Приносът на сфрагистиката. *Градът в Българските земи (по археологически данни)*. стр. 343. [Ivan Yordanov. 'The Mediaeval Town of Constantia (4th—13th c.). The Contribution of Sigillography'. Pavel Georgiev (ed.). *The Town in the Bulgarian Lands (According to Archaeological Data). Proceedings of the National scientific conference dedicated to the life and activity of Vera Antonova*, Shumen, 2014, p.343.]

⁵¹ Alexandru Madgearu. *The Asanids: The Political and Military History of the Second Bulgarian Empire, 1185–1280*. 2017, p.111.

and erasing his debt to them. But, whether because of the advanced stage of his negotiations with Pope Innocent III for recognition of his royal title (that would become fact just a few months later), or due to unpleasant memories from his forced stay in Constantinople or simply because he had decided to wait until the situation played itself out, Kaloyan never took this step. The fact remains, though, that the discovery of this seal in the territory of the erstwhile Bulgarian city of Constantia is indicative of the situation in Byzantium on the eve of the fall of Constantinople to the knights of the Fourth Crusade and the efforts of the Byzantine emperor to seek viable solutions to resolve this problem.

Conclusion

Archaeological artefacts belonging to the period of the crusades in Bulgaria provide a unique opportunity that has thus far never been utilised by scholars. This evidence dated to the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries represents an excellent opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the Third and Fourth Crusades and the aftermath of the capture of Constantinople by the crusaders. Wars and devastation described in written sources, regardless their origins, find confirmation through the recorded damage of the settlement structure and evidence of mass migrations and relocations. Furthermore, archaeological artefacts with Western origins from this period and area are capable of helping us trace the movement of crusader armies. The information that lead seals from royal correspondence can give us is also intriguing. Despite the fact that the seals can lead to more questions than answers, their presence at certain locations such as capitals or fortresses definitely enrich our perception of the ways in which medieval people interacted. It is important for every scholar to search for links between geographic locations and events mentioned in written sources, and to correlate them with relevant archaeological artefacts. This chapter provides a strong basis for further research.

The next chapter will examine all extant archaeological artefacts from Bulgaria, whether references in publications or not, that bear any relation to the Fourth Crusade. They will be compared with relevant written sources in a systematic way. By doing this, the exact routes taken by the knights can be reconstructed and information from written sources can be verified. Also, thanks to some of these archaeological discoveries, new facts will be revealed for which written sources have remained silent.

Chapter VIII

The Routes of the Fourth Crusade and the Conquest of the Balkan Peninsula by the Latin Empire

Introduction

The combination of archaeological data, written sources, and historical analysis presents a unique opportunity for scholars to reconstruct the past with unprecedented accuracy. As was examined in the previous chapter, archaeology is capable of substantiating the validity of written sources. Archaeological artefacts of Western origin discovered in the relevant stratigraphic layer in southeastern Europe provide a solid basis for well-reasoned interpretations of existing written material. Moreover, a careful juxtaposition of the writings of Geoffrey of Villehardouin with relevant archaeological artefacts allows us not only to confirm or deny the authenticity and veracity of written sources and supply missing links in the sequence of events, but also to reconstruct with accuracy the routes of the crusader army as it passed through and campaigned in Bulgaria. Whether trade routes, military invasions, or diplomatic activity, combining these sources allows maps to be drawn that chart the movements of the crusaders in a way that has never been attempted previously.

The peculiarities of the weaponry and riding equipment as a starting point for further research

The unique differences between Eastern- and Western-style military equipment during the era of the crusades provide sufficient evidence to support the claim that spurs, crossbow bolts, a certain type of helmet, and protective gear discovered in southeastern Europe constitutes conclusive proof of a knightly presence at a relevant archaeological site. Indeed, it must be emphasised that spurs were only characteristic of Western knights and constituted an important part of a knight's armor both literally and figuratively.¹ The dubbing ritual, as practiced from the ninth to twelfth century, prescribed that the person being dubbed wear gilded spurs, a suit of armour, and a helmet. The type of metal the spurs were forged from was likewise

¹ Lynn White Jr. *Medieval Technology and Social Change* Oxford University press, London- Oxford- New York, 1966, p.150. See also: D.Nikolic. 'Tipoloski razvoj mamuze od XIV-XX veka s osvrtom na zbirki mamuza u Vojnom muzeju JNA'. *Vesnik VM*, kn.3, Izdaje Vojni muzej Jugoslovenske narodne armije. Beograd. ,1956,pp. 61-62.

a status symbol that declared his position in society and the army.² The importance of spurs in Western Europe can be gleaned from the famous Battle of Courtrai, popularly called the ‘Battle of the Golden Spurs’, fought between French knights and Flemish infantry on 11 July 1302.³ After the French were defeated, the Flemings found hundreds of gold spurs on the battlefield and used them to decorate the Church of Our Lady in Kortrijk to commemorate the victory.⁴ Byzantine soldiers at the time of the crusades did not wear spurs;⁵ therefore, their appearance in an eleventh-thirteenth century archaeological context is a sure sign of the presence of Western knights.

More information about Eastern types of armour and the lack of spurs can be gleaned from data from archaeological excavations. Neither the Byzantine army nor the semi-nomadic tribes that crossed Eastern Europe used spurs in their military equipment. This can be proven by the grave of a Cuman horseman found near a village named Zlatna Livada (Golden Meadow) in southeastern Bulgaria during the 2011 archaeological season. The village is situated midway between Philipopolis and Adrianople along the main road. These two cities were scenes of fierce battles between the crusaders of the Third and the Fourth Crusades and the Bulgarian army with its Cuman mercenaries, as described in previous chapters. Thanks to archaeology, we have a unique chance to see what was included in Cuman military kit (Figure 22).

² Blanche M.A. Ellis. ‘Spurs and spurs fittings’. John Clark(ed.) *The Medieval Horse and Its Equipment, C.1150-c.1450*. Boydell Press, Museum of London, Woodbridge, 2004, p. 124-126. See also: Blanche M.A. Ellis. *Prick Spurs 700-1700*. The Finds Research Group AD700-1700, Datasheet 30, p.1. Excerpt: ‘Spurs were made from iron or copper alloy; the former were often tinned to protect them from rust and enhance their appearance. As they developed, their importance as a fashion accessory denoting the status of horsemen increased and they were often decorated, silvered and gilded. By the Middle Ages gilded spurs were used in the ceremonies of knighthood and had become symbolic of that rank.’ Retrieved from: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/534be0cbe4b04a5110f67497/t/541043a9e4b0b9b9b9bd0b5623/1410352041786/FRG30-datasheet.pdf>. (Accessed 01.05.2018).

³ J.F. Verbruggen. *The Battle of the Golden Spurs: Courtrai, 11 July 1302*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, Rev.ed., 2002.

⁴ Richard Cavendish. ‘The Battle of the Golden Spurs’, *History Today*, Volume 52, Issue 7 July 2002. Retrieved from: <http://www.historytoday.com/richard-cavendish/battle-golden-spurs>. (Accessed 09.04.2017).

⁵ Timothy Dawson. ‘Suntagma Hoplôn: the equipment of regular Byzantine troops, c. 950 – c. 1204’. David Nicolle (ed.), *Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour*. Boydell & Brewer, London, 2002, pp. 81–90.



Figure 22. Cuman weaponry and horse equipment from Zlatna Livada grave, 1222- mif thirteenth century.National Historical Museum-Sofia, Image: Chavdar Kirilov.

As we can see, the sword is a very different type when compared to the crusader's sword from Chapter VII. In fact, this is a sabre and there are stirrups with buckles for fastening the straps, but no spurs, body armour, shield, or helmet. Including the horse's bridle, knife, and arrowheads, the equipment of a Cuman warrior differs significantly from the equipment of a Western knight. Around the right elbow of the skeleton, a gold wire was found, as well as a coin, which was broken into several pieces and placed on and around different parts of the skeleton, including at the pelvis, immediately above the right shank, and just below the right knee. It was an electrum coin minted by John III Dukas Vatatzes of Nicaea (1222-1254) that

determined the chronological *terminus post quem* of this particular tomb, which coincided with the period of the Latin Empire and its fierce battles against Bulgaria and its Cuman mercenaries.⁶ Considering the presence of the gold wire and the high nominal value of the coin (66% gold and 33% silver), we can conclude that this Cuman warrior had high rank in the army and his military equipment is full and of high quality. Thanks to this discovery, we can also see and understand the meaning of the term ‘light cavalry’. The Cuman horse riders were faster than crusader knights, which was one of the reasons for the latter’s defeat near Adrianople and the capture of Latin Emperor Baldwin I in 1205.⁷

Similarly, Eastern armies did not use crossbows at this time – they were introduced to the East by crusaders. Byzantine written sources describe the crossbow as a ‘barbarian’ and ‘Latin’ weapon. Anna Comnena, a Byzantine princess who wrote the *Alexiad* around 1148, says: ‘The crossbow is barbarian bow, unknown to the Greeks.... Its blow is so great that whoever is struck by it is most unfortunate, he dies without feeling or knowing what hit him’.⁸ In the fourteenth century, Byzantine Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1347-1354) in his *History* also describes the crossbow as a ‘Latin bow’.⁹ Although the crossbow was little known to the Greeks, it had become a widespread problem in the West by the mid-twelfth century, causing Pope Innocent II to take strict measures against its use. The Second Lateran Council, summoned and held by the pope in 1139, produced the following law (N29): ‘We prohibit under anathema that murderous art of crossbowmen and archers, which is hateful to God, to be employed against Christians and Catholics from now on’.¹⁰ In Bulgaria, bolts from crossbows made and used locally are found in stratigraphic layers from late fourteenth century in

⁶ Димитър Янков, Румяна Колева, Чавдар Кирилов, ‘Средновековно селище и некропол при с.Златна Ливада км. 19+900 – 20+400 от АМ Тракия’л Мария Гюрова (ред.)л *Археологически открития и разкопки през 2011г.*л НАИМ-БАН, Авангард, София, 2012, с. 490; Dimitar Yankov, Rumiana Koleva, Chavdar Kirilovл ‘Medieval settlement and necropolis near village Zlatna Livada km. 19+900-20+400 of Highway Trakia’. *Archaeological discoveries and excavations 2011*. National Archaeological - Historical Museum-Bulgarian Academy of Science, page 490,Avangard, Sofia, 2012, p.490.

⁷ Geoffrey de Villehardouin. *Memoirs or Chronicle of The Fourth Crusade and The Conquest of Constantinople*. Frank T. Marzials (trans.). J.M.Dent, London, 1908, page 94; Retrieved from : <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/villehardouin.asp>. (Accessed 13.05.2018). [‘There on the field remained the Emperor Baldwin, who never would fly, and Count Louis; the Emperor Baldwin was taken alive and Count Louis was slain’].

⁸ *The Alexiad of Anna Comnena*. E. R. A. Sewter (Translator, Introduction).Penguin Classics, Baltimore, 1969, p.316.

⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos. ‘Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum’. Libri IV, Ludwig Schopen (ed). *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, 3 vols, Bonn, 1828-1832, p.174.

¹⁰ *Second Lateran Council 1139AD. Council Fathers 1139AD*. With selected bibliography for Ecumenical Councils. Retrieved from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Councils/ecum10.htm>., (Accessed 02.05.2018).

Tarnovgrad.¹¹ There are no records or archaeological finds showing an earlier use. For the Cuman, the crossbow is also an unknown weapon that would be too heavy for their type of warfare. In the Cuman grave from Zlatna Livada, there is an arrow (Figure 22, upper left corner), but its size (3.5cm) and type are wrong for a crossbow.

Spurs and bolts are small items that can be easily lost during horse riding or in battle. But finding such items of crusaders origin at archaeological sites dating to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries within Bulgaria is an excellent starting point for collaboration between archaeological and written sources, and restoring history with greater detail and accuracy.

In the footsteps of the crusaders

Establishing the routes used by the knights of the Fourth Crusade and the subsequent Latin Empire north from Constantinople into the lands of modern Bulgaria is relatively easy. It can be done using the descriptions of Geoffrey of Villehardouin, who was also part of these events. In the second part of his chronicle, he describes the period after the capture of Constantinople and the subsequent campaigns to conquer a number of fortresses and settlements to the northwest of the capital. There were three military campaigns deep into the territory of modern Bulgaria that took place between the years 1204 and 1207. For the same of this thesis, these campaigns will be called: 'The rescue of Renier of Trit', 'The pursuit of Kaloyan', and 'The foraging expedition to la Ferme'. While describing these events, Villehardouin wrote about a number of population centres located within the territory of Bulgaria including Rodestius, Fraim, Moniac, Stenimachos, Veroi, Blisme, La Ferme, and Aquilo. However, there is an obstacle that must be overcome for anyone who wants to create a map based on Villehardouin's account. Apparently, Villehardouin found it difficult to adequately record some of the placenames in these newly-conquered territories. Thus, for example, he names Philippopolis, a millennia-old city named after Philip II of Macedon, as Finepopolis.¹² Whereas the town of Thermae, known for its Roman baths, he renames La Ferme.¹³ That Villehardouin was an outstanding erudite for his day is undisputable, yet he did not transcend the limitations of his contemporaries by trying to study the etymology of the

¹¹ Деян Рабовянов. 'За употребата на арбалета в средновековна България'. Борис Борисов (ред.). *Великотърновският университет "Св. св.Кирил и Методий" и българската археология*. Том 1. Велико Търново, 2010, стр.561-570; Deyan Rabovyanov. 'For the use of crossbow in medieval Bulgaria'. Boris Borisov (ed.). *University of Veliko Tarnovo 'St.St. Cyril and Methodius' and Bulgarian archaeology*. Volume 1, Veliko Tarnovo, 2010, pp. 561-570.

¹² A. B. Bosworth. *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001, p.12.

¹³ Tsonya Drajeva, Dimcho Momchilov. *Akve Khalide – Therma, the city of the hot mineral baths*. Regional Museum Burgas, Burgas, 2012.

placenames of these conquered towns and cities that dated to Roman and pre-Roman times. However, as an active knight, commander, and participant in the rearguard of the crusader army, his writings are without a doubt the most valuable written source about the events in question available to us today.

Several of the populated areas and fortresses found in Villehardouin's writings have retained their names to the present. For the purposes of this chapter, I shall draw up and present two maps. Map 4 is based exclusively on the descriptions made by Villehardouin and other relevant written sources, with supplementary detail from archaeological data. The importance of Villehardouin's account for the creation of this map is vital. Scholars around the world accept that his account is accurate and 'anticipates modern documentary history by avoiding stylistic embellishments and presenting strictly chronographical progression from event to event'.¹⁴ Comparing 'epic' versus 'reality', Peter Noble claims that 'The early chroniclers are, therefore, relatively unaffected by epic and more concerned with the reality of warfare'.¹⁵ Noble cites Villehardouin's claim that 'he has not lied by one word to his knowledge' and he suggests that 'there is no reason to doubt this assertion'.¹⁶ However, none of these scholars use archaeology as a tool to verify the truth and accuracy of the written accounts. This is why this thesis and these maps aim to prove that there is other way. Maps 4 and 5 visualise the advantages of augmenting written sources with archaeological evidence from areas described in such sources. Is Villehardouin's account trustworthy and are there any signs of crusaders presence in the places described by him?

Map 5 includes all of the detail from Map 4 plus archaeological artefacts related to the the Fourth Crusade found in fortresses, settlements, and roads, but not mentioned in written sources from the period. What was omitted by the written sources? How the archaeological data can create and supplement the written accounts for the history of the Fourth Crusade?

Creating Map 4

Several campaigns undertaken by the knights of the Fourth Crusade in the lands of what is today Bulgaria have been described in written sources. The most dangerous of these was the pursuit of Kaloyan into the Rhodope Mountains and the rescue of Renier of Trith in 1207 from a thirteen-month-long siege in the town of Stenimachos, located within the same mountain

¹⁴ Noah D. Guynn. 'Rhetoric and Historiography: Villehardouin's *La Conquete de Constantinople*'. *The Cambridge History of French Literature*. William Burgwinkle, Nicholas Hammond, Emma Wilson (eds). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011, pp.102-110(105).

¹⁵ Peter Noble. 'Epic Heroes in Thirteenth-Century French Chroniclers'. *The Medieval Chronicle*, vol. III, 2004, pp.135-148.

¹⁶ Peter Noble. 'The importance of Old French chronicles as historical sources of the Fourth Crusade and the early Latin Empire of Constantinople'. *Journal of Medieval history* 27, 2001, pp.399-416, (pp.409-410).

range. Also, of interest are the two military campaigns of Emperor Henry in southeastern Thrace, undertaken in pursuit of the Bulgarian army for the release of hostages and to plunder. Unfortunately, the Villehardouin account ends in September 1207 with a description of the death of Boniface I, Marquess of Montferrat. The timeframe for these events is from April 1204 (the capture of Constantinople) to September 1207. Below is how the data obtained from Villehardouin's descriptions are supplemented with evidence from archaeological finds dating from this period. Detailed information about the fortresses mentioned by Villehardouin is presented on Map 4.

First mission: The rescue of Renier of Trit

After the establishment of the Latin Empire, Emperor Baldwin I rewarded Renier of Trit with Philipopolis and its surroundings. At the end of April 1204, Kaloyan undertook several campaigns in Thrace and conquered and destroyed a number of cities. In June, he decided to capture Philipopolis. Part of the Paulician population living in the city negotiated the surrender of this mighty and strategic fortress.¹⁷ Renier of Trit, who had a small company of around fifteen knights, learned of this betrayal by the Paulician heretics, burned their neighborhood, left the city, and retired to the fortress of Stenimachos, 15 km to the south. The Bulgarian army conquered and devastated Plovdiv, then besieged unsuccessfully Stenimachos for thirteen months. There, according to Villehardouin, Kaloyan (called Johanitsa) was chased away by the crusaders. This rescue mission is well described by Villehardouin, who was one of its leaders. This is also a great source of information on the nearby fortresses and the route of the crusaders through the hostile Rhodopi Mountains.

Rodestiuc

The first fortress mentioned by Villehardouin regarding the rescue of Reneier of Trit is the fortress at Rodestiuc:

News then arrived in the Franks' camp that Johanitsa had installed himself at a castle called Rodestiuc and so, the following morning, the Frankish army set out in that direction to seek

¹⁷ Janet Hamilton, Bernard Hamilton, Yuri Stoyanov (eds.). *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World, C. 650-c. 1450: Selected sources translated and annotated*. Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, 1998, p.259.

battle. But Johanitsa then decamped and rode on, retreating towards his own lands. Our forces followed him for five days, with Johanitsa always keeping ahead of them.¹⁸

The locals still call a fortress in the Rodopi Mountains Rodestitza. This is a Slavicised name of the medieval Rodestiuc. The distance between Rodestiuc and Fraim is 110 km and corresponds to a normal five-day journey traveled by a crusader army.¹⁹ The excavation of the fortress began in 2004 and was launched by Bonny Petrunova. The cultural layers there reach a depth of 2.20 m (Figure 23).



Figure 23. Archaeological excavation of Rodestitza fortress. Image: Angel Trendafilov.

¹⁸ Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*. Penguin books, London 2008, page 117. Original Old French text: [‘Et lors vint la novella en l’ost des Frans que Johannis ere logiez a un chastel qui a nom Rodestiuc. Et al matin mut l’ost des Frans, et chevaucha vers cele part por la bataille querre. Et Johannis se desloja et chevauchs arries vers son pais. Ensi le suirent par.v.jornees, et il adés s’en ala devant als. Lors se herbergierent al cinquisme jor sor un bel leu, a un chastel que on appelle le Fraim.’] ‘Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*. éditée et traduite par Edmond Faral. Société d’édition ‘Les Belles Lettres’, Paris, 1939, II, p.246.

¹⁹ ‘The First Crusade started from Cologne on 20th April 1096, and arrived at Constantinople on 1 August 1096: a distance of some 2,500km completed in 104 days. 17 days were given over to fighting and resting and 87 days for travel. The average daily progress of the crusaders’ army was 28 km.’ It is normal for a crusader mission in Rhodopi Mountain to achieve slightly lower distance per day (22 km) due to the terrain. See more: Charles R. Glasheen. ‘Provisioning Peter the Hermit: From Cologne to Constantinople, 1096’. John H. Pryor(ed.), *Logistics of Warfare in the Age of the Crusades*, , Ashgate, (MPG Bokks Ltd, Bodmin, Cornwall), 2002, p.121.

The earliest data for human habitation of Rodestiuc dates to the fourth century A.D. In the eleventh century, the function of the fortress was changed as the population moved outside its walls while the enclosed space between the large buildings was converted into a necropolis with rich tombs. This was made possible by the fact that, in this period, there was no immediate threat to the borders of the Byzantine Empire. Nevertheless, excavations here yielded a large number of coins, luxurious pottery, brass trim from the binding of a book with hagiographic imagery, as well as architectural alterations to existing buildings. The latest find was a silver coin from the time of the crusader Guillaume II, who ruled the duchy of Athens in the early fourteenth century. In 2014, routine excavations uncovered six billon (an alloy of 66% silver, 33% gold) coins of Emperor John III (1222-1254), discussed above and shown in Figure 11.²⁰ Billon is an alloy of silver and gold, and the coins found are of the highest value that have ever existed. This is clear evidence that the fortress was inhabited by some wealthy people and that there was perhaps brisk trade going on in these lands. The coins were in use during the time of the Latin Empire, and their discovery shows that the fortress was well developed and intensively used during this period. These coins are positive evidence that the fortress remained in existence after Kaloyan's residence and the crusaders' presence in 1206-1207. Unfortunately, the archaeological excavation at Rodestiuc has revealed no artefacts related to the crusades. The fortress is still an active archaeological site and further excavations may reveal more.

Fraim

The second fortress from the rescue mission is Fraim. Villehardouin writes of this place: 'On the fifth day our army encamped in a pleasant spot by a castle called Fraim, where they stayed for three days'.²¹ The fortress is served as a staging post on the way to Stenimachos. The fortress of Gluhite Kamani (Fraim) has been the subject of excavations since 2006. It is located at an altitude of 560 m above sea level and 3 km north of the village of Efrem (Figure 24). The name Gluhite kamani (Deaf Stones) is the modern name for this mountainous area, because for some reason the stones absorb voices, even screams, and there is no echo. Efrem

²⁰ Ивайло Кънев 'Изключителна находка на Родостица -шест сребърни монети в бронзов съд'. Ivaylo Kanev. 'Exceptional find at Rodostica – six silver coins in bronze vessel'. 12.08.2014, Ivaylovgrad web-site. Retrieved from: <http://ivaylo-org.blogspot.co.nz/2014/08/blog-post.html>. (Accessed 12.05.2018).

²¹ Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*. Penguin books, London 2008, page 117. Original Old French Text: ['Lors se herbergièrent al quint jor sor un bel leu à un chastel que on apelle le Fraim ; enqui sejoynèrent par trois jorz.'] *Chronique de la prise de Constantinople, Avec Notes et Éclaircissements* Par J.A.Buchon. A Paris, Chez Verdière, Libraire, 1828, p.169.

derives its name from Fraim, as mentioned by Villehardouin. It was a privilege for me to be part of the team conducting the excavations here from 2006 to 2013 (Figure 25).



Figure 24. View from Fraim fortress, looking south. Arda River is in the background. Image: Angel Trendafilov.



Figure 25. Archaeological excavation of the inner citadel of Fraim fortress. Angel Trendafilov (pictured) is searching for crusader-related artefacts. Image: George Nekhrizov.

The post-crusader history of Fraim is similar to the previous fortress. There is evidence that the place was inhabited well into the Classical period by Thracians, but there is a marked absence of human activity between the sixth and the eleventh centuries, and then the fortress was repopulated and used extensively until the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The reason

for the return of the population to this mountain stronghold was discussed in Chapter VII and reflected the great uncertainty of life on the plains as a result of the crusades. Routine excavations in 2014 yielded eleven bronze coins from the fifth and sixth centuries and seventeen coins from the eleventh twelfth centuries. The fortress covers a huge area of perhaps 20,000 m² and has a church built in it. The church was operational in the fifth and sixth centuries and then a new, larger church was built upon its ruins in twelfth century. The compound also features a monastery carved into the cliff face and a large stately building with 1-1.2 m-thick walls.

In the opinion of the research team headed by Dr. Georgi Nekhrizov – and in my personal opinion – the fortress fell under the blows of either the Third or Fourth Crusade and was probably sacked. Its significance declined thereafter, as the walls were likely destroyed and traces of human habitation sharply decreased. Here we have discovered artefacts that bear clear evidence of the presence of knights. Spurs and huge crossbow bolts, trademarks of crusaders, were unearthed within the fortress walls and reveal in no uncertain way that a knight's boot trod here. I submit as evidence Figure 26, Figure 27 and Figure 28, all unpublished material found in the excavations. These items confirm the credibility what Villehardouin recounts.

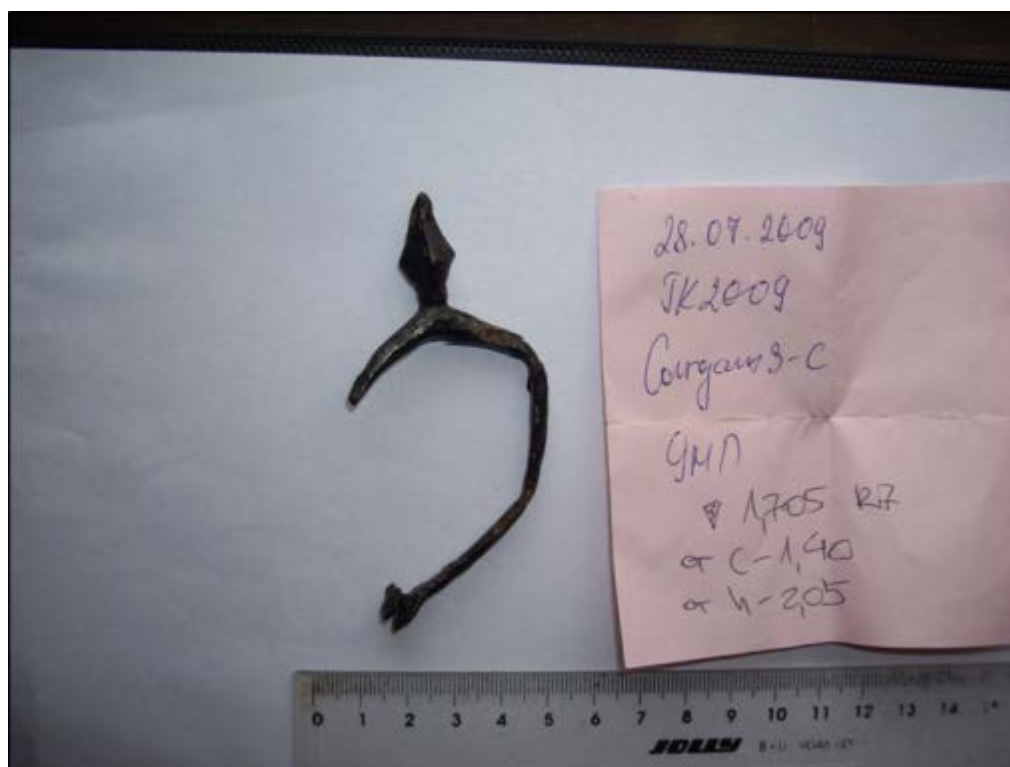


Figure 26. Crusaders's spur from Fraim Fortress, late twelfth – early thirteenth century. Historical Museum – Haskovo, Bulgaria. Image: Angel Trendafilov.

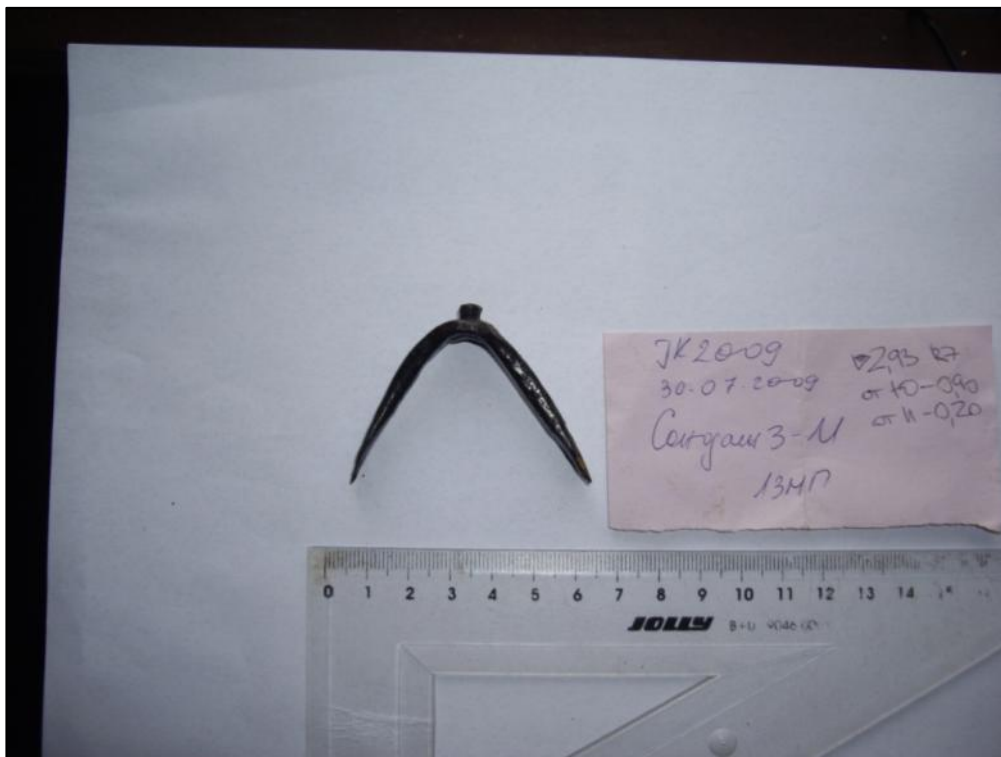


Figure 27. Broken crusader's spur from from Fraim Fortress, late twelfth – early thirteenth century. Historical Museum – Haskovo, Bulgaria. Image: Angel Trendafilov.



Figure 28. Crossbow bolt 10.5 cm long (without the length of the iron tang for fitting into the wooden shaft) found in Fraim fortress, late twelfth – early thirteenth century. Historical Museum-Haskovo. Image: Angel Trendafilov.

From Adrianople to Stenimachos, the fortresses described by Geoffrey of Villehardouin in the course of his participation in the expedition to rescue Rénier of Trit certainly exist in reality in the territory of present-day Bulgaria. These were Rodestiuc and Fraim, but also Moniac and Stenimachos. It should be noted that Villehardouin mentioned more than once that Crusader's journey in the Rhodope Mountain was happening deep into enemy territory, that the population was inherently hostile; the expedition was described as a very risky operation undertaken by the knights of the Fourth Crusade.

Moniac

And so they moved on for another two days and then set up camp in a most beautiful valley, near a castle called Moniac. The castle surrendered to them.... While Henry stayed at camp near Moniac with most of his men, the rest went to rescue Renier of Trit at Stanimaka [Stenimachos]. And know that those who went on this expedition did so in great peril. Few rescue missions so dangerous have ever been undertaken; they had to ride across enemy territory for three days.²²

The remains of the fortress of Moniac, with its wall, towers, and water tanks, date to between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The preserved part of the outer wall has a length of 270 m and a height in some place of 7-8 m. This is one of the largest fortresses in Bulgaria, with an enclosed area of some 20,000 m². The walls are between 1.5- and 1.95-m-thick, encompassing the fortified area and standing on one end atop a vertical cliff with a sheer drop of several hundred meters, at the bottom of which flows the river Arda. The fortress had three fortified towers, not counting those of the inner castle. Part of the ruins still rise to a height of about 5 m, hinting at the erstwhile greatness of this place (Figure 29 and Figure 30).

²² Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*. p. 117. Original French text: [Ils chevauchèrent pendant deux jours et camperent en une tres belle vallee, pres d'un chateau qu'on appelle Moniac. Et ce château leur fut rendu, et ils y séjournèrent pendant environ cinq jours. Et ils dirent qu'ils iraient secourir Renier de Trit, qui était assiégé dans l'Estanemac et y avait été enfermé environ treize mois. Henri le régent de l'empire demeura au camp, ainsi qu'une grande partie de ses gens: le reste alla secourir Renier de Trit a l'Estanemac. Et sachez qu'ils y allèrent très périlleusement, ceux qui y allèrent, car on a peu vu d'aussi périlleuses rescousses. Et ils chevauchèrent trois jours à travers la terre de leurs ennemis.] Villehardouin. *La conquête de Constantinople*. éditée et traduite par Edmond Faral. Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', Paris, 1939, II, p.249-251.



Figure 29. The entranche of Moniac fortress built twelfth–thirteenth century. Image: Stanislav Iliev.



Figure 30. ‘...most beautiful valley, near castle called Moniac’ . Description by Vellehardouin. The wall of Moniac fortress above Arda River and valley below. Image: Stanislav Iliev.

The results of the excavations at Moniac have likewise been very interesting. During a siege, the fortress was attacked with trebuchets.²³ The wall was destroyed in part and possibly penetrated. In the subsequent reconstruction, the wall was rebuilt, reinforced, and built higher. This event is dated using very specific ceramic shards with gold inlays used in a construction project that predates the early thirteenth century. The inner citadel of the fortress was protected by five towers and a wall enclosing an area of 2,000 m². Four of the towers still survive. Extremely well preserved is the inner gate that leads to the city. It is flanked by semi-circular and square towers that could watch the entry gate. The double doors originally opened inward. Excavations of the vestibule have yielded more interesting data. The entire space was covered by a layer of burned timber. Amid the ashes, two types of nails were discovered with solid decorative heads.²⁴ It is highly probable that this layer bears evidence of the complete sacking of the castle and the citadel. The archaeological results show utter devastation of Moniac around the end of twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries. But in the quotation above by Villehardouin, he unambiguously states that Moniac ‘surrendered’ to Henry the Regent of the Latin Empire. This suggests a seamless entry into the fortress. So who was responsible for the serious damages to Moniac fortress around this time? A significant written source called the *Letter on the death of the Emperor Frederick* written by a member of the Third Crusade holds the answer:

We continued on from there with great difficulty through the regions of Bulgaria. First, the city of Philipopolis was captured and destroyed, then the famous fortress of Berrhoe was destroyed and the whole of the surrounding region was laid waste by the sword; the noble city of Adrianople was also captured along with the surrounding towns and region, and the impregnable fortress of Dimotika was captured by the duke of Swabia, after innumerable inhabitants of the village had been killed. A certain fortress named Moniak was also destroyed by our knights and a few people from the army, and almost eight thousand Greeks perished there by fire and sword.²⁵

²³ Николай.Овчаров , Д.Коджаманова. *Перперикон и околните твърдини през Средновековието - крепостното строителство в Източните Родопи*. Тангра ТанНакРа ИК, София 2003, р. 34. Nikolay Ovcharov, D.Kodjamanova. *Perperikon and nearby fortresses during the Medieval ages – fortifications construction in Eastern Rodopi*. Tangra TanNakRA Publishing house, Sofia 2003, p.34.

²⁴ Ibid., p.43.

²⁵ ‘Letter on the Sacred Expedition of the Emperor Frederick I’, G.A.Loud (trans.). *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and related text*. Ashgate, Farnham, 2010, pp.169-173. Original text from *Quellen über die Taten Kaiser Friedrichs I. in Italien und der Brief über den Kreuzzug Kaiser Friedrichs I*, ed. & trans.in German by Franz-Josef Schmale. *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*. Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe 17a, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1986, pp.372-382.

Therefore, it is highly probable that the knights of the Third Crusade did indeed conquer the fortress in late 1189-early 1190. The Bulgarian kingdom was just restored in 1185 and still fragile, located far to the north of the Balkan Mountains and unlikely to intervene. The repairs to the fortress walls recorded by the archaeologists probably took place between 1190 and 1206, when Henry found the fortress intact and inhabited.

Artefacts related to the crusades were found within the enclosed area of the fortress including six arrowheads, part of a sword blade, and two fragments of iron helmets.²⁶ Other items worthy of interest are seven bronze and iron appliques, a bronze ring with an image of a saint, a fragment of a bronze bracelet, as well as five solid metal buckles for soldiers' belts. Four of the buckles are made of iron, whereas the fifth is made of silver and is a veritable work of art. Whether these artefacts are from the Third Crusade or the Fourth Crusade is difficult to determine. But what is more important is that it is possible and appropriate to draw a parallel between the archaeological evidence and written sources as the '*Letter on the death of the Emperor Frederick*' and Geoffrey of Villehardouin's account both quoted above. In this case, history and archaeology correspond in full. No less important is the fact that this was the fortress where Henry was elected Latin Emperor after the news for Baldwin's death was brought by Renier of Trit. According to Villehardouin:

They kept riding for two days, and on the third they came to the camp where Henry, the emperor's brother was waiting for them; they had their quarters, beneath the castle of Moniac, which was located on the River Arda... The barons decided they should go to Constantinople and have Emperor Baldwin's brother Henry, crowned.²⁷

Today, there is commemorative board installed by the European Union and the Bulgarian government at the entrance to the Moniac fortress to remind the public that this was the place where Henry became emperor (Figure 31). Despite the tensions in the past this is a good way to commemorate an important historical fact and underline the significance of Moniac fortress.

²⁶ Николай Овчаров, Д.Коджаманова. *Перперикон и околните твърдини през Средновековието - крепостното строителство в Източните Родопи*, p. 48-68; Nikolay Ovcharov, D.Kodjamanova. *Perperikon and nearby fortresses during the Medieval ages – fortifications construction in Eastern Rodopi*, Sofia 2003, p.48-68.

²⁷ Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*. pp.117-118. Original French text: [...et chevauchièrent par deus jorz ; et al tiers jor vindrent à l'ost où Henri, le frère l'empereor, les attendoit sor le chastel de Moniac, qui siet sor le flum d'Arze où il estoit herbergiez. Lors pristrent conseil li baron que il iroient en Constantinople et que il coroneroient Henri, le frere l'empereor Baudoin.] *Chronique de la prise de Constantinople*. Avec Notes et Éclaircissements Par J.A.Buchon, A Paris, Chez Verdière, Libraire, 1828, p.169.

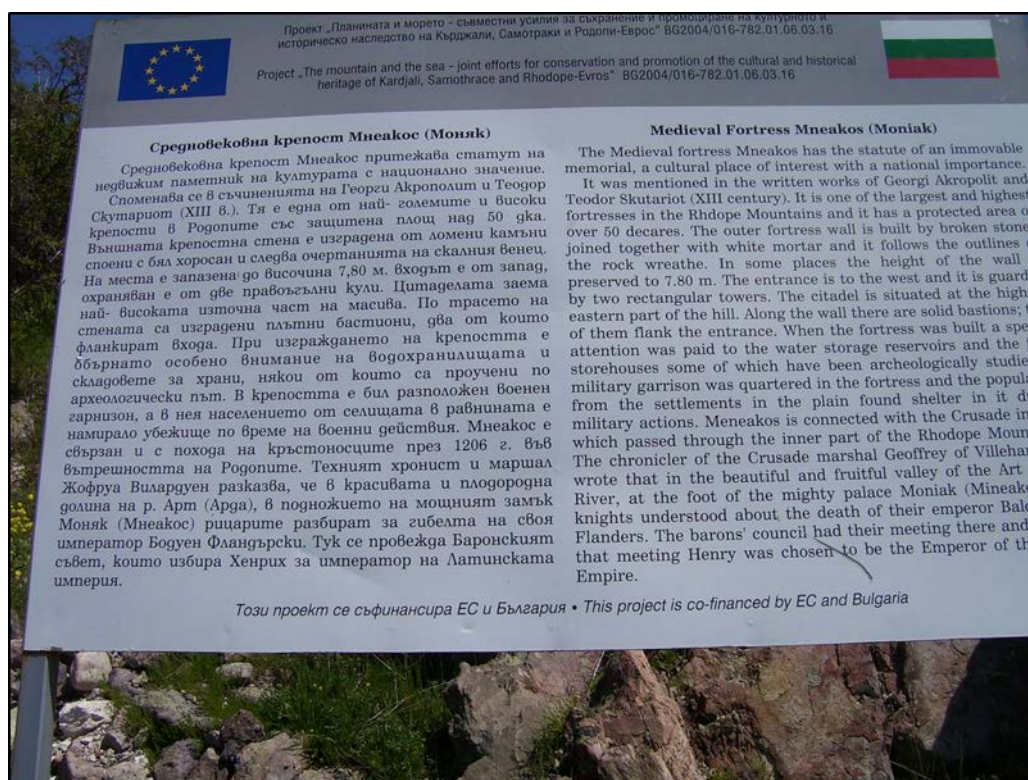


Figure 31. The information board in Moniac fortress highlights the presence of the crusaders from the Fourth Crusade and the proclamation of Henry of Flanders as a Latin Emperor. Image: Stanislav Iliev.

Stenimachos [Stanimak]

The last fortress mentioned by Villehardouin in regard to the rescue mission of Renier of Trit is Stenimachos. This is the fortress where Renier was besieged by the Bulgarians for thirteen months:

Renier then went on the castle of Stanimaka, three leagues away [from Philipopolis], which was garrisoned by his men. He went inside and holed up there for a long time, a good thirteen months, in deep uncertainty and great want; their hardship was such that they ate their horses. Stanimaka was nine days journey away from Constantinople, and the people either place could get no news of one another.²⁸

After thirteen months, the besiegers fled, surprised by the approaching crusaders army, and Renier of Trit was reunited with his companions to his great relief.

²⁸ Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 108. Old French text: [Et il s'en alla au chateau d'Estanemac, qui était à trois liuses de là et étqit occupé pqr ses gens, et il y entra, et il y fut serrez, bien .XIII. mois, a gran mesaise et a grant poverte, et menja ses chevax par destrece. Et ere .VIII. jounées de Constantinople loing, que nus ne pooient nouvelles oir li uns des autres.]' Villehardouin. *La conquête de Constantinople*. éditée et traduite par Edmond Faral, Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', Paris, 1939, II, p.212.

Renier of Trit was at the barricade outside the walls of Stanimaka when he caught sight of the vanquard being led by Marshal Geoffrey, and then other battalions that were following behind in good order.²⁹

The name of the fortress of Stenimachos remained unchanged until 1934. Until that date, the town was called Stanimaka, but it was renamed Asenovgrad in honour of Ivan Asen II. Excavations were conducted on the site of the fortress Stanimak (Figure 32) in 1946, but records for the archaeological data are not very good.



Figure 32. Stenimachos fortress is built in extremely inaccessible terrain, which explains hoe Renier of Trit managed to defend the fortress with only fifteen crusaders for thirteen months. Image: Stanislav Iliev.

Digging around the outer perimeter of the fortress wall yielded three iron spearheads, three arrowheads, parts of a mediaeval chain mail made from iron ringlets, and a well-preserved rusted soldier's helmet of conical shape, with an oval opening at its base. There is also mention of an unearthed coin dating from the time of Byzantine Emperor John Tzimiskes in the tenth

²⁹ Caroline Smith (trans., ed), Joinville and Villehardouin. *Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 118. Old French text: ['Reniers de Trit ere as bailles des murs et choisist l'avan garde que Joffrois li mareschaus foisoit et les autres batailles qui venoient après mult ordeneement.'] Villehardouin. *La conquête de Constantinople*; éditée et traduite par Edmond Faral, Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', Paris, 1939, II, p.250.

century and a collective find of hollow copper coins minted during the reigns of the Emperors Manuel I Comnenus, Andronicus I Comnenus, and Isaac Angelus (covering the period 1143-1195).³⁰ Regrettably, there are no available images of these artefacts although it is very possible that some of them were of Latin origin.

Modern technology has made the castle of Stenimachos accessible by means of a virtual tour. The municipality of the town of Asenovgrad has produced a very good website that offers a virtual sightseeing experience of the fortress, which is perched on a steep hillside, via a 3D model and many photographs.³¹ This is a unique opportunity for people who have never visited these places to get a feel for the atmosphere of the locale. From this virtual tour, we can learn how Renier of Trit managed to hold the fortress for thirteen months with just fifteen crusaders: placed on the top of a high mountain, *Stenimachos* is not an easy target even for the mighty army of Kaloyan.

Archaeological data related to Villehardouin's account of the 'Rescue mission of Renier of Trit' and the fortresses visited by the crusaders during this journey match almost completely. Rodestiuc definitely existed at the time and was populated with wealthy inhabitants. However, no crusader-related artefacts have been found so far. The excavations in the fortress are still ongoing. In Fraim, Moniac, and *Stenimachos*, artefacts with Western origins from the corresponding archaeological layers have been found. The presence of knights from the Third and Fourth Crusades in these fortresses, described by Villehardouin, Ansbert, and in the *Letter on the Death of the Emperor Frederick* can be confirmed on this basis.

Second mission: The pursuit of Kaloyan (Johanitsa)

The second mission deep into Bulgarian territory was led by Emperor Henry with the aim being the pursuit of the retreating Kaloyan and his army. Two settlements are mentioned by Villehardouin in regard to this mission, the first being Veroi/Beroe.

³⁰ Николай Хайтов. *Асеновград в миналото. Исторически очерк*. Второ издание, Издателство "Христо Г. Данов", Пловдив 1983, стр.56 – 58. Nikolai Haitov. *Asenovgrad in the past. Historical outline*. Second edition. Published by Hristo G. Danov press, Plovdiv 1983, p.56-58.

³¹ Asenovgrad municipality web site. *Stenimachos* Virtual tour. Retrieved from <http://gis.assenovgrad.com/360/citadel/index.html>. (Accessed 05.05.2018). Recommended browser: Maxton.

Beroe

And so Henry rode after Johannizza, though he always managed to stay ahead of the emperor, who maintained his pursuit for four days before arriving at a town, called Beroe.³²

Beroe is the old Thracian name of the city founded in the fifth century B.C. The Roman name of this town is Augusta Trayana, renamed around 106 A.D. by Emperor Marcus Ulpius Traianus (98-117 AD). In 812, the city became part of the First Bulgarian Kingdom under the name Vereya, Bereya, or Beroya.³³ A variation of this name is used by Villehardouin in his *Conquest of Constantinople*. Unfortunately, the fortress of Beroe is located underneath the modern-day city of Stara Zagora. This is a place of many millennia-old archaeological layers revealed only during rescue archaeological excavations at construction sites within the city. Regrettably, due to the high level of urbanisation, no comprehensive exploration or systematic recording of the archaeological potential hidden in the city's bowels is possible (Figure 33). The destruction of Beroe is mentioned in the *Letter on the Death of the Emperor Frederick*, described above.

³² Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*, p. 120. Old French text: [Et chavaucha après lui; et cil s'en ala devant ades;et ensi lesut per .IIII.jorz. Lors vint a une cite que on apeloit Veroi.] Villehardouin. *La conquête de Constantinople*; éditée et traduite par Edmond Faral, Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', Paris, 1939, II, p.258.

³³ Ivan Dikov. 'Archaeologists discover floor mosaic from ancient Roman city Augusta Trayana in Bulgaria's Stara Zagora'. 28 September 2016, <http://archaeologyinbulgaria.com> . Retrived from: <http://archaeologyinbulgaria.com/2016/09/28/archaeologist-discovers-floor-mosaic-from-ancient-roman-city-augusta-traiana-in-bulgarias-stara-zagora/>. (Accessed 05.05.2018). Short history about town's history and names in the second part of the article.



Figure 33. City of Stara Zagora is overlapping the medieval city of Beroe. The stadium belongs to football club called Beroe. Image: Alexander Ivanov.

Blisme

The fortress of Beroe, however, can serve as a starting point for further discoveries along Henry's route. As Villehardouin writes:

They then set out from Beroe with all this booty and rode to another town, a day's journey away, that was called Blisme.³⁴

A city of a similar name was mentioned by Ansbert:

After all arrangements were made in that way, on 5 November we left Philippopolis and made our way to Adrianople, around which there was a concentration of Greek troops that had made their camp there. On the third day we arrived at the town of Blizimos.³⁵

³⁴ Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*. p. 120. Original French text: [Lors se parti de cele citée toz ses gaeiens et chevaucha a une alter cite loing d'ici a une jornee que on apele Blisme.] Villehardouin. *La conquête de Constantinople*; éditée et traduite par Edmond Faral, Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', Paris, 1939, II, p.260.

³⁵ Ansbert. *Historia de expedicione Frederici Imperatoris. FLHB*. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Volume III, Latin – Bulgarian bi-lingia, Sofia, 1965, pp. 245-291(273). Original Latin text: [' His ita

The town of Blisme/Blizmos has not yet been located, but Dyadovo is the modern name of the village where archaeological evidence from the Third or Fourth Crusades has been found. There is a fortress near Dyadovo that is only 30 km from Beroe. This is an achievable distance for a crusader army to travel in a day, as was proven earlier in this chapter. Moreover, the country between Beroe and Blisme is absolutely flat. The fortress near Dyadovo has yielded at least five knights' spurs dating from the early thirteenth century. Boris Borisov published three of the spurs in 1991, the later two spurs are still yet to be published (Figure 34)³⁶

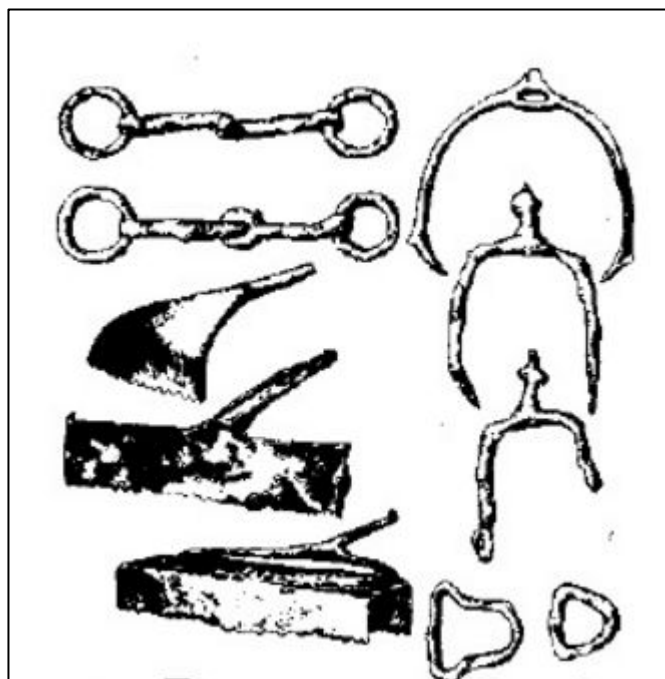


Figure 34. Three spurs (right) and other metal objects found in the fortress near Dyadovo. Image: Boris Borisov, (footnote N 36).

This is incontrovertible evidence of the presence of a knightly army in the area and an exciting opportunity to find the location of a missing location from the map of the Third and Fourth Crusades. The fortress was conveniently located and suitable as shelter for the crusader armies. Shaped like an irregular quadrangle of 80 by 60 m, the walls were 1 m thick and built from crushed stone, bound by mortar and rows of bricks at regular intervals.³⁷

ordinatis nonis novembris exivimus a Phylippoli et versus Adrianopolim iter arripuimus, in cuius confiniis iterum exercitus Grecorum adunatus consistebat, et tertia die venimus ad oppidum Blisimos.']. My English translation.

³⁶ Борис Борисов. 'Икономиката на средновековното селище върху селищната могила до с. Дядово, Бургаско', *Известия на музеите от Югоизточна България*. том 14, Литера Принт, Стара Загора, 1991, стр.68-88. Boris Borisov. 'The economics of the medieval settlement on the top of the settlement hillock near Dyadovo village, Bourgas region'. *Proceedings of the museums from southeastern Bulgaria*, Vol.14, Litera Print, Stara Zagora, 1991, pp.68-88 (p.85). Retrieved from: <https://bit.ly/2MyUcPm>. (Accessed 24.08.2018).

³⁷ Никола Койчев. *История на Нова Загора. Новозагорско през вековете*. Арта графикс, Ст. Загора, 1997. Nikola Koychev. *History of Nova Zagora. Nova Zagora region through the centuries*. Arta Graphics, Stara Zagora, 1997.

There were towers at the four corners – at the western wall these were square, whereas at the eastern wall they were acute-angled, their pointed edges jutting northwards and southwards respectively. The entrance to the fortress, shaped like a barbican, was through the eastern wall (Figure 35 and Figure 36).

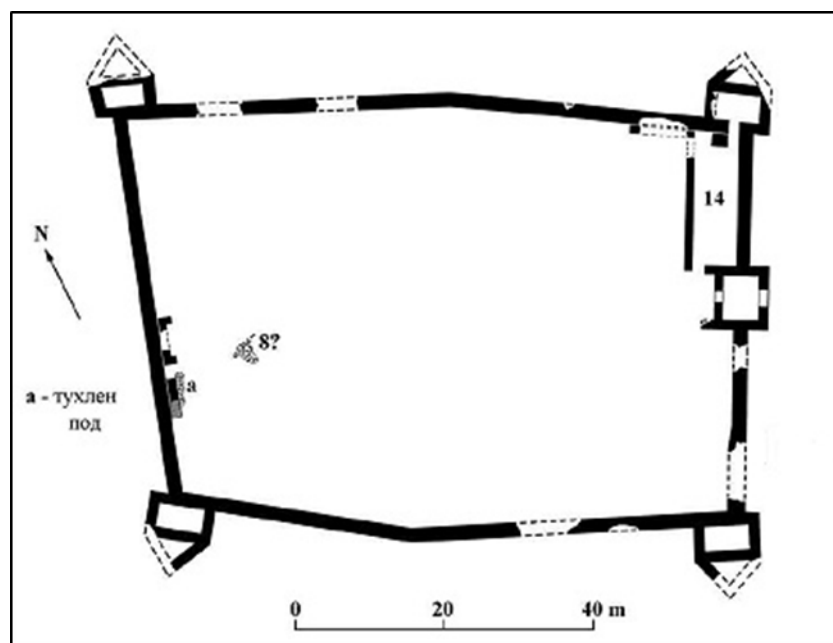


Figure 35. The fortress near Dyadovo. Scale map by Nikola Koychev.

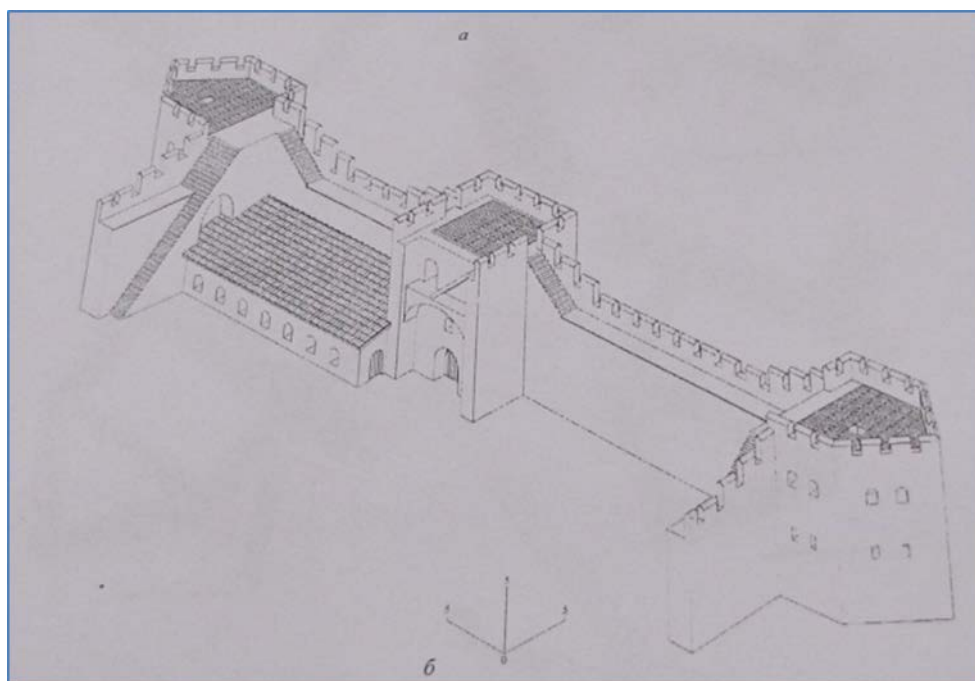


Figure 36. The fortress near Dyadovo. Reconstruction by Nikola Koychev.

According to Ansbert, the distance between Philipopolis and Blizimos is equal to three days' travel. The distance between Philipopolis and the modern village of Dyadovo is 109 km,

which a crusader army could cover in three days at 33 km per day. The road between these two towns crosses flat country. While 33 km per day is more than the usual 25-28 km per day recorded for previous journeys of the crusaders, it is probably still achievable. The spurs found in the fortress are of Western origin. The fortress is situated on the route through which the crusader armies described by Ansbert and Villehardouin would have travelled. The fortress is on three-day ride from Philipopolis and a one-day ride from Beroe. Therefore, we can assume with a great deal of certainty that this is the missing town of Blisme/Blizmos. It turns out that Blizimos was an important fortress for the knights of the Third and Fourth Crusades. Considering the distances described in the literary sources and the archaeological evidence, one can now claim that the whereabouts of Blisme/Blizimos is known.

Third Mission: The foraging expedition to la Ferme

Shortly after the second mission to Beroe, somewhere in the autumn of year 1206, the crusader army led by the Emperor Henry conducted another ride deep into Bulgarian territory described by Villehardouin.

Thermae (La Ferme)

Day after day they rode out beyond Adrianople, going far enough to enter the lands of Johanitsa, king of Vlachia and Bulgaria. They came to city called Thermae which they captured and entered, seizing a great quantity of spoils. They stayed there for three days and overran all the surrounding country, where they won lots of booty and destroyed a town called Akilo. On the fourth day they left Thermae which was a beautiful and pleasantly situated town where world's loveliest hot springs flow. The emperor destroyed the city.³⁸

The town of Thermae has been known since the days of the Roman Empire by the name the Aquae Calidae and it was one of the most distinguished spa centres in ancient times. The name

³⁸ Caroline Smith (trans., ed). Joinville and Villehardouin. *Chronicles of the Crusades*. p.122. Old French text: [Et l'empereres rot assebbles ses genz qui orent a garrison menez lor gaainz de Visoi, qu'il avoient fait en l'ost. Et chevaucha par devant Andenople par ses jornees, tant que il vint en la terre Johannis le roi de Blaquie et de Bougrie. Et vinrent a une cite qu'on apeloit la Ferme, et la pristrent et entrèrent enz, et I firent mult grant gaain. Et sejournerent enz per .III. jorz, et corurent per tot le pais, et gaaignierent granz gaaienz, et destruisirent une cite qui avoit nom l'Aquilo. Al quart jor se partirent de la Ferme, qui ere bele et bient seant; et I sordoient li baing chaut le plus bel de tot le monde; et la fist l'emperere destruire et ardoir...']. Villehardouin. *La conquête de Constantinople*; éditée et traduite par Edmond Faral, Société d'édition 'Les Belles Lettres', Paris, 1939, II, p.265-266.

Aquae Calidae means ‘hot waters’ in Latin. In the Middle Ages, Aquae Calidae became known as Thermae or Thermopolis (‘warm city’ in Greek). The difficulties of Villehardouin with the pronunciation and accurate recording of the local topography names renamed this famous city to ‘La Ferme’. But the presence of the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade is without any doubt. In Thermae during the archaeological excavations conducted in 2010 crusade-related artifacts were found. There are also 45 coins from the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century and bronze seal with Latin inscriptions.³⁹ Considering the short stay of Emperor Henry and his army (three days), these are significant finds. The bronze seal with a Latin inscription is badly damaged and incomplete with missing name. However, its stylistic and iconographic characteristics can be associated with similar Latin seals found in Bulgaria (considered in Chapter VII) the stay of the Latin knights of Henry in 1206 at the medieval fortress and baths (Figure 37).⁴⁰



Figure 37. Lead seal (1204-1261) found in Thermae. Image: Deyan Rabovyanov.

Aquilo

The other town mentioned by Villehardouin is Aquilo. There are two possibilities for the location of this town. The first one is that Aquilo is probably today’s Bulgarian village of

³⁹ Tsonya Drazheva and Dimcho Momchilov. ‘Aquae Calidae’. Burgas museum. Retrieved from: <http://www.burgasmuseums.bg/index.php?page=encdetail&id=24>. (Accessed 11.05.2018). There is also 45 coins from the end of 12 and beginning of the 13th century found recently in 2015. Preliminary press release of Burgas municipality: ‘Акве Калиде разкрива своите хилядолетни тайни’. [Aqua Calidae uncovers millennium secrets]. Retrived from: <https://geograf.bg/bg/article/akve-kalide-razkriva-svoite-hilyadoletni-tayni>. (Accessed 05.05.2018).

⁴⁰ Ivan Yordanov. Corpus of Byzantine seals from Bulgaria. Vol. 3, Part 1, Sofia, 2009, no. 204.

Aheloy which lies at distance of 31 km from Thermae. The second option is that this is the town of Pomorie whose old name was Anhialo until 1934. The distance between Thermae and Anhialo is only 20 km. Both Anhialo and Aheloy are in the range of a daily trip for the crusaders. Unfortunately, no archaeological excavations have been conducted in the area so far. However, Anhialo is a very old town founded by Greek colonists in fifth century B.C. and famous trade centre and mineral hot water resort for centuries.⁴¹ Given these facts and the shorter distance it is very likely that Anhialo is the town mentioned by Villehardouin and plundered by the knights of the Fourth Crusade.

Based only upon Villehardouin's descriptions for these three missions, we can draw up a map that would provide a basic idea of the movements of the crusaders army. The simple placement of arrows on a map to indicate the progress of knightly armies across a territory may be informative up to a point but remains incomplete. One of the crucial factors in moving a heavily armed mediaeval army were the roads that it could use. Most scholars accept that the crusaders armies used the old Roman roads.⁴² The territory of today's Bulgaria was criss-crossed with solidly-built Roman roads, which we know were heavily used well into the Middle Ages and beyond. They remained in use between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, in the times of the Ottoman Empire.⁴³ Many of them are in amazingly good shape even today (Figure 38).

⁴¹ Procopius. *On Buildings*. H. B. Dewing (trans). Loeb Classical Library, London, 1940, p.219. Excerpt: ['There is a certain city on the coast of the Euxine Sea [Black Sea], inhabited by Thracians, Anchialus by name, which properly we should mention in describing the land of Thrace. But since in the present place our treatise has enumerated the buildings of this Emperor [Justinian] along the shore of the Euxine Sea, it is in no way inappropriate to describe at this point in our narrative what he built at this town of Anchialus. At that place, then, natural springs of warm water bubble forth, not far from the city, providing natural baths for the people there. The Emperors of earlier times used to allow this place to remain unwalled from ancient times, though such a host of barbarians dwelt near by.].

⁴² Conor Kostick. *The Social Structure of the First Crusade*. 2008, p.1. See also: John H. Pryor. 'Introduction'. John H. Pryor (ed.). *Logistics of Warfare in the Age of the Crusades: Proceedings of a Workshop held at the Centre for Mediaval studies*. Univeristy of Sydney, Ashgate, Cornwall, 2002. p.4 . See also in the same book: Bernard S. Bachrach. 'Crusaders logistics: From victory at Nicaea to resupply at Dorylaion', p.43:Excerpt: ['The Crusaders mostly followed old Roman Roads and for the most part the Byzantines had diligently kept the key arteries of military and commercial transportation in repair for centuries.'].See also: G.A.Loud(trans.). *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa.The history of the expedition of Frederick Barbarossa and Related Texts*. Ashgate, Surrey, 2010, Intoruction by G.A.Laod, p.25. Excerpt: ['For much of the journey trough the Balkans the expedition [the Third Crusade] followed the old Roman military road from Belgrade towards Constantinople...'].

⁴³ Farid Al-Salim. *Palestine and the Decline of the Ottoman Empire: Modernization and the Path to Palestinian statehood*. I.B.Tauris, London, New York, 2015, Chapter 9, p.2. Excerpt: ['These networks were based on old Roman roads that were further developed and maintained during Mamluk rule and later by the Ottomans.'].

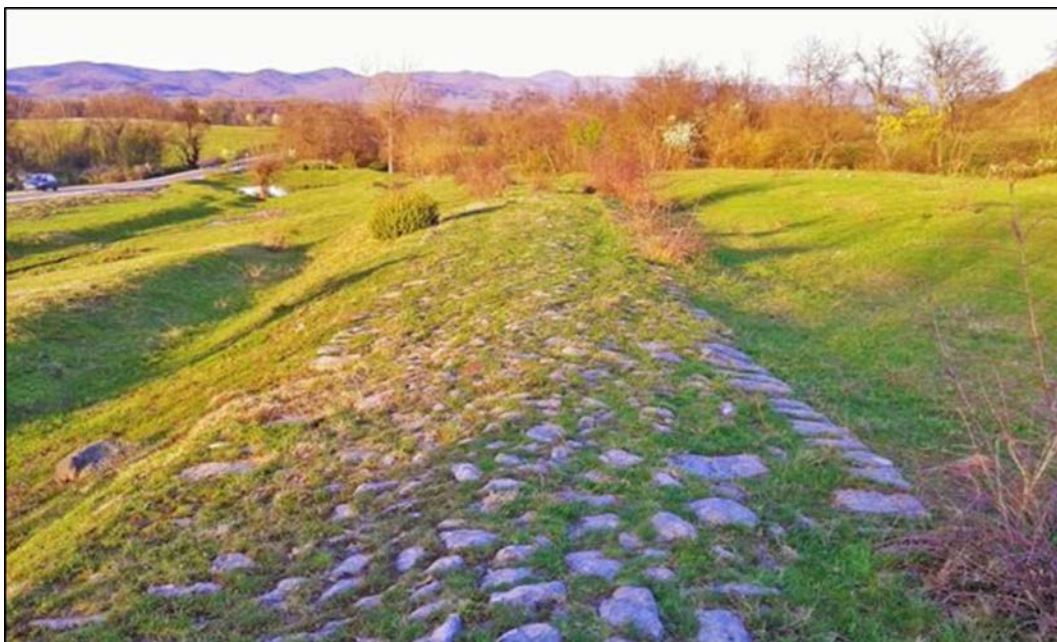


Figure 38. The Roman road between Fraim and Moniac fortress near Dolni Glavanak, Bulgaria. The new asphalt road with running cars is visible at left. Image: Angel Trendafilov.

It is due to a recent study by Mitko Madjarov, which covers all preserved Roman roads in Bulgarian territory in addition to over 100 discovered milestones that we are now in a position to draw up a much more accurate map of the movements of the knights' armies on the basis of Villehardouin's and other written sources descriptions.⁴⁴ The map of the old Roman roads is very useful and it is an excellent base for further research, which will cross-examine the archaeological data and the written sources about the movement of the crusaders (Figure 39).

⁴⁴ Митко Маджаров. *Римски пътища в България. Принос в развитието на римската пътна система в провинциите Тракия и Мизия*. Издател "Фабер", София, 2009. Mitko Madzharov. *Roman Roads in Bulgaria. Contribution to the development of Roman road system in the provinces of Moesia and Thrace*. Faber publishers, Sofia, 2009.

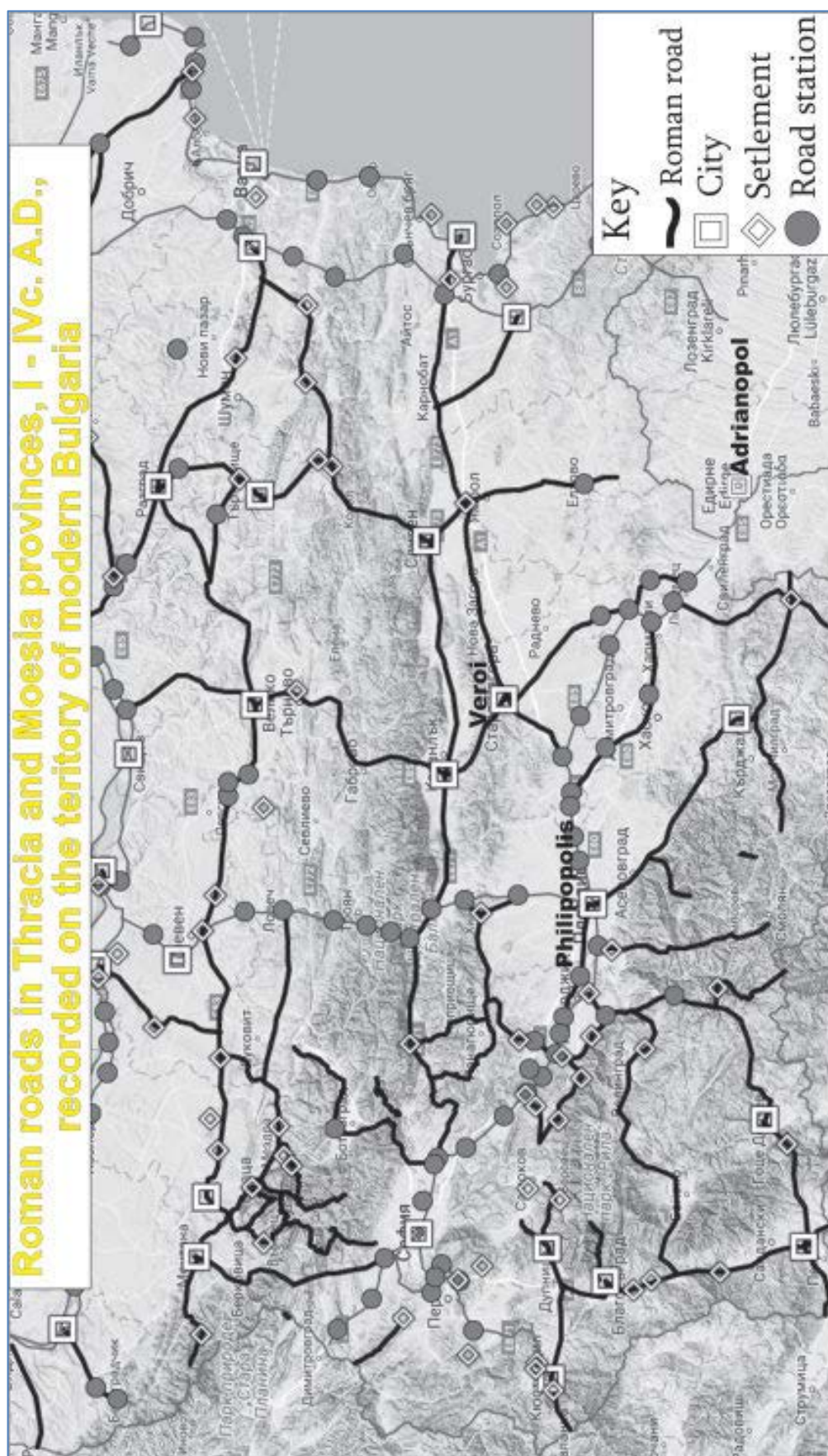


Figure 39. Map 3. The Roman roads recorded on the territory of modern Bulgaria. Image: Mitko Madzharov, Ognyan Stoyanov and Angel Trendafilov.

The archaeological data revealed above (some of it never published before) for the fortresses (Rodeștiuc, Fraim, Moniac, *Stenimachos*, Beroe, Blisme, La Ferme, and Aquilo) mentioned by Villehardouin confirms crusaders presence in five out of eight fortresses. They are Fraim, Moniac, *Stenimachos*, Blisme, and La Ferme. The remaining three fortresses: Rodeștiuc definitely has some interesting finds but not crusaders from early thirteenth century and the excavations are still ongoing, Beroe is highly urbanised area, and Aquilo never had archaeological excavations.

Taking all this in to account and following strictly Villehardouin's descriptions about the three expeditions undertaken deep into the Bulgarian territories between 1204 and 1207, and considering the archaeological data confirming the presence of the crusaders and not forgetting Roman roads used by the crusaders, Map 4 was created, showing the routes taken by the knights of the Fourth Crusade (Figure 40).

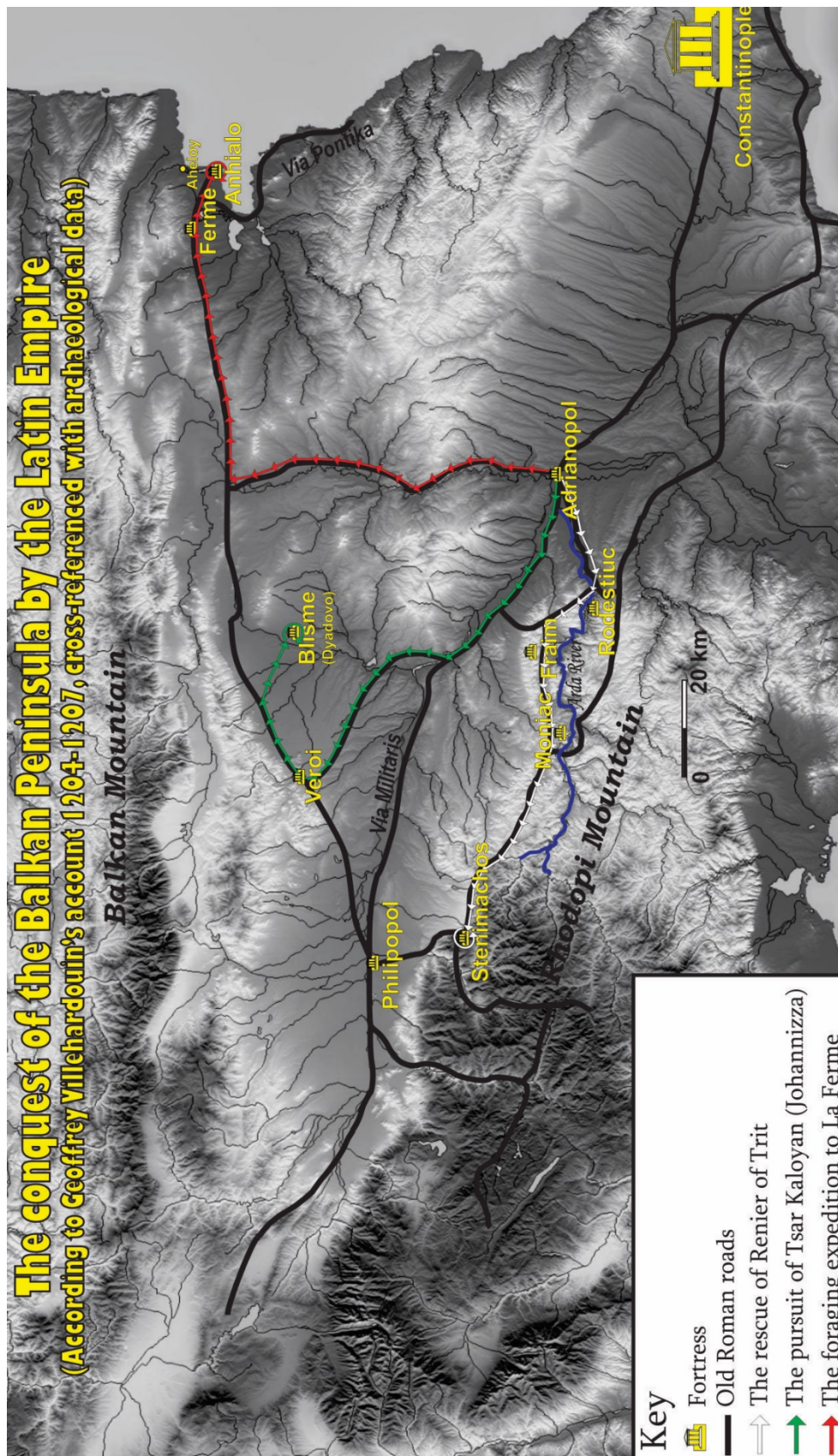


Figure 40. Map 4, based on Vellehardouin account of the fortresses visited by the crusaders during the three military expeditions between 1204 – 1207, supplemented by archaeological artefacts and data relating to old Roman roads in the area. Created by Angel Trendafilov.

Creating Map 5

Map 4, based on Villehardouin's account, gives a basic idea of the events described in his book, supplemented by archaeological evidence of crusaders activities and the old Roman road structure. But is this good enough? What is missing from the map? These are the details that Villehardouin and other written sources have omitted in their descriptions either because he deemed them immaterial or because he simply did not know about them. With the assistance of archaeology, we are able to compile a much more complete and detailed map that traces the perambulations of the knights of the Fourth Crusade. If we add all of the archaeological evidence of the knightly presence in these lands, Villehardouin's historical narrative becomes much fuller and more convincing. Also, we are able to trace events related to the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire, for which the written sources remain silent. All this is included on Map 5.

Addition to *The Foraging expedition to La Ferme*

Apolonia Pontika

During their stay in Thermae or on their way back to Adrianople the crusaders from the Latin Empire attacked another fortress which is not mentioned by Villehardouin. Apolonia Pontica is situated at 46 km south from Thermae and there is evidence for Western presence from the era. In 2012, during routine excavations at the fortress wall of the town of Sozopol (known also by its ancient name, Apollonia Pontica), archaeologists discovered a very interesting item: a knight's halberd used by the Western knights in storming fortress walls during the twelfth-fourteenth centuries (Figure 41). This type of weapon is most certainly of Western origin. One side of it is shaped like an axe, the other like a pickaxe that the infantrymen accompanying the knights used to climb walls with them storming a fortress. Probably the knights of the Fourth Crusade mounted an attack against these parts of the southern Black Sea coast. After the seizure of Thermae and Aquilo the attack against Apolonia Pontika was probably part of actions to 'overran all the surrounding country' described by Villehardouin. Though Villehardouin does not mention Apollonia Pontica (Sozopol), the find of a halberd prompts us to think that perhaps individual detachments of the army of Emperor Henry had attempted to mount an attack on the neighbouring fortresses. If there was such an attack, it was clearly unsuccessful. That fact is evidenced by the discovery of the halberd outside the fortress wall, in the moat, where it was probably dropped in the heat of the attack. After four days, the crusaders withdrew from this remote and hostile area. This halberd is not yet officialy

published but information in English about the find circulates on the internet, illustrated with a photograph.⁴⁵ This find expands our vision of the so called ‘Foraging mission to La Ferme’ and gives us idea about the perimeter of action of the crusaders while foraging.



Figure 41. Halberd found in front of Apolonia Pontika city walls, c. twelfth – fourteenth century. Image: Teodor Radionov.

Malkoto kale fortress and Parorian monastery complex

Malkoto kale fortress is located in remote area in Strandja Mountain, some 54 km northeast from Adrianople and just 9 km from the present Bulgarian – Turkish border. At just 400-450 metres from the Malkoto kale fortress an impressive medieval Parorian monastery is situated (Figure 42 and Figure 43). Both sites are probably related in one complex and the archaeological excavations conducted in the fortress and the monastery confirm that they were demolished and burned down at the end of 12th - the beginning of 13th century.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Hristina Dimitrova. ‘Intriguing new archaeological finds in Bulgaria’. News of Sofia website, 04.06.2012. Retrieved from: <http://sofiaglobe.com/2012/06/04/bulgarias-archaeological-season-starts-with-new-findings/>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

⁴⁶ Стефан Бакърджиев, Явор Русев. Археологически проучвания на средновековна крепост „Малкото кале“, с. Воден, община Болярско, област Ямбол. *Археологически открития и разкопки през 2016 г.* София, 2017, с.574-576. Stefan Bakardjiev and Yavor Rusev. Archaeological research of medieval fortress Malkoto Kale, Bolyarovo municipality, Yambol region. *Archaeological discoveries and excavations in 2016*, Sofia, 2017, pp. 574-576.

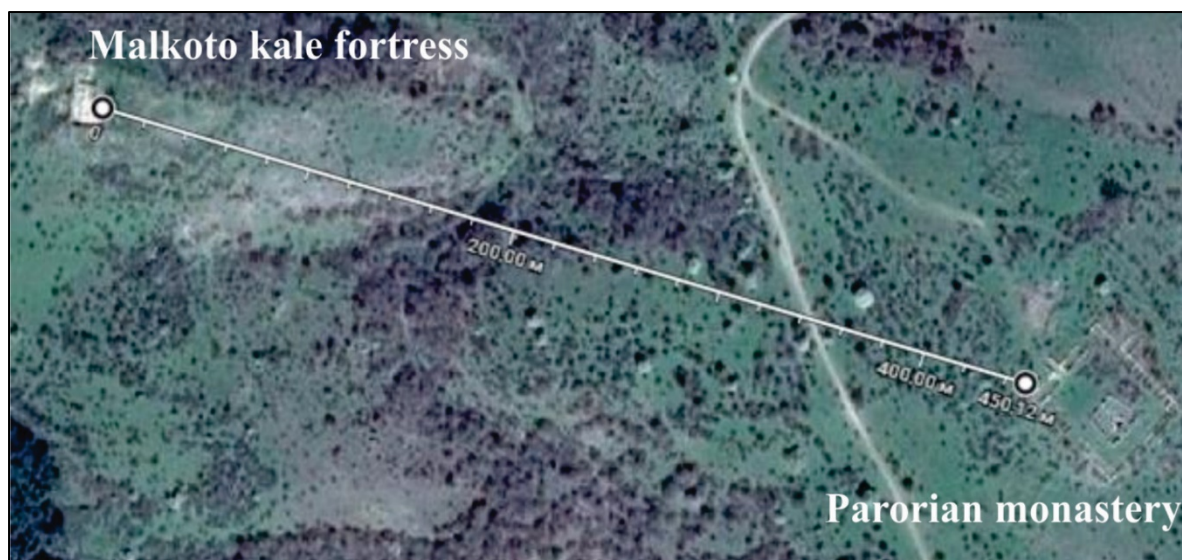


Figure 42. The distance between Malkoto kale fortress and the Parorian monastery is about 450 metre. Image: Google maps.



Figure 43. The entrance of the Parorian Monastery near Malkoto kale fortress. Image: Valeria Fol

Archaeological excavations have been conducted on both sites since 2008 but the discoveries made in 2016 and 2017 are very important for the present thesis. In 2016 a single iron spur was found at Malkoto kale fortress (Figure 44).



Figure 44. Iron spur late 12th-early 13th century from Malkoto kale fortress. The scale is 5 cm. Image: Stefan Boyadjiev.

The date of this spur is 12-13th century ⁴⁷ and it is consistent with the dates of the other spurs found in Bulgaria. Next year in 2017 during the excavations of the Parorian monastery another two spurs were found. Now, less than year ago we have journalist's photos from presentation held by the archaeological team for the members of the nearest municipality centre called Bolyarovo. ⁴⁸ (Figure 45). I also have a confirmation via e-mail from the archaeologist Stefan Bakardjiev that the spurs have similar date to the one found in 2016 at Malkoto Kale fortress. All three spurs from Malkoto Kale Fortress and the Parorian monastery will be published (probably) in the next few years, however now we have the chance to insert this valuable new information and photos into the body of this research. The discovery of these spurs confirms the crusaders presence at Malkoto Kale fortress and the Paronian monastery. Given the fact that they are just 450 m apart this is not surprising. The time of the destruction of the two sites is within the range of the passage of the Third Crusade (1189-1190) and the aftermath for the Fourth Crusade, respectively the foraging mission of Henry of Flanders to the Ferme (Aqua Kalide) in 1207. Unfortunately, the changes of the shape of the crusaders spurs was slow, it is not possible the changes in this equipment to be traced in the course of 27 years. That is why we are not able to put distinctive date for the above mentioned three spurs. Undoubtedly they belong to the crusaders army and their broad date is corresponding with the Third and the Fourth Crusade. As for the Third Crusade the only possibility is that the spurs

⁴⁷ Blanche M.A. Ellis. *Prick Spurs 700-1700*. The Finds Research Group, York Archaeological Trust. Published and available online: <http://www.findsresearchgroup.com>, Datasheed 30, p 1-10 (Accessed 03.08.2018).

⁴⁸ 'Докторантите и студентите от Международния Югоизточен летен университет представиха новите си находки.' Секция Новини на <http://bolyarovo.eu/bg/pubs/4165?tip=0>. ' Phd and MA students from International Summer South-eastern University are presenting their latest finds'. News of Bolyarovo municipality. Retrieved from: <http://bolyarovo.eu/bg/pubs/4165?tip=0> . (Accessed 03.08.2018).

found in Malkoto kale fortress and the Parorian monastery belong to foragers on a two days mission (one day one way) aside to the main route to Adrianople. The shortest route from the main road towards Adrianople and Malkoto kale is 31 km. Such a possibility is not out of the ordinary. The other plausible option is that the spurs found at Malkoto kale fortress and the Parorian monastery probably belong to the returning army led by Henry of Flanders on his way back from the mission to Ferme. Geoffrey of Villehardouin is laconic about their way back: 'Then they rode day by day till they came back to the city of Adrianople.'⁴⁹ It is possible that the army of Henry of Flanders rode south via this old Roman road going straight to Adrinapolis instead of taking the route via Veroi which is much longer. The crusaders probably knew about the Malkoto kale fortress and the Parorian monastery nearby and took the opportunity to conquer and loot these places. And they did! The three crusader's spurs and the last stratigraphical layer with traces from fire damage are quite telling, opposite to Villehardouin or any other written source who never mentions such an experience. The artefacts from Malkoto kale fortress and the Parorian monastery are perfect example how unknown facts and events can be restored and inserted to the existing history thanks to the archaeology.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey de Villehardouin. *Memoirs or Chronicle of The Fourth Crusade and The Conquest of Constantinople*. Frank T. Marzials (trans.). J.M.Dent, London, 1908, page 120. Retrived from : <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/villehardouin.asp>. (Accessed 13.05.2018) .



Figure 45. Two crusaders spurs found in 2017 during the excavation of Parorian monastery near Malkoto kale fortress (shown with white arrows) Image: Bolyarovo Municipality web site.

Addition to the the pursuit of Kaloyan (Johannitsa)'

Mezek

Mezek fortress lies just 35 km north from Adrianople. It is impossible for someone who is going north to miss the massive walls of this fortress, which remains well-preserved to this day (Figure 46). This is the case with the route of the second mission described by Villehardouin. The chase of Kaloyan started from Adrianople and went north to Beroe and Blisme.



Figure 46. Mezek fortress built eleventh-twelfth century. Image: Stanislav Iliev.

Excavations in the fortress were banned until recently because Mezek is too close to the national border between Bulgaria and Turkey. However, the ban was lifted and Bulgarian archaeologists have recently found spurs and crossbow bolts. Villehardouin does not mention Mezek in his book; however, now we know that the crusaders from the Fourth Crusade were there. Thanks to my colleague Stanislav Iliev, the archaeologist from my home town museum Haskovo, I can include in my thesis this unpublished information and photos (Figure 47 and Figure 48).



Figure 47. Spur from Mezek fortress, c thirteenth century. The scale is 20cm. Image: Stanislav Iliev, Historical Museum – Haskovo.



Figure 48. Crossbow bolts from Mezek fortress with average size 8-9 cm., late twelfth – early thirteenth century. The scale is 20cm. Image: Stanislav Iliev, Historical Museum - Haskovo.

Addition to the rescue of Renier of Trit

This mission begins from the fields around Adrianople and goes through the first fortress of Rodestiuc towards *Stenimachos* which is located on the right bank of River Arda, still in the foothills of the Rhodopi Mountains. Somewhere around Rodestiuc, where the country is still flat, the knights led by Emperor Henry and Villehardouin most likely have crossed the on the

left bank of the river, because all fortresses mentioned by Villehardouin after this (Fraim, Moniac and *Stenimachos*) are located at the left bank of river Arda. That would not be of great interest, but two big fortresses with evidence of the presence of knights located deep in Rhodope Mountains have been found and they are located at the right bank of River Arda. How is that possible? The route to *Stenimachos* along the left bank of the river is well described by Villehardouin and proven by archaeological excavations in Fraim, Moniac and *Stenimachos*, as was revealed earlier in this chapter. But there are some crusaders activities on the right bank of the river which Villehardouin did not describe. He is not that detailed in his book about their way back to Constantinople. He only mentioned Moniac once where Henry of Flanders remained while waiting for news and after the decision was made to proclaim him Emperor. Villehardouin describes their way back very laconically: ‘And so Henry and the other barons went to Constantinople, riding day after day until they reached that city.’⁵⁰ For sure the rescuers of Renier of Trit and Renier of Trit himself have merged with Henry of Flanders in Moniac but there is no accurate account for their way back to Constantinople. This uncertainty for the way back of the participants in this mission can find its explanation through the results from the archaeological excavations in the fortresses Okopa and Lyutitza, located at the right bank of river Arda. It is possible that part of the army had chosen different way back from Moniac. While the fortresses on the left bank of the river were already investigated/looted by the crusaders army, tempting fortresses remain untouched at the other side of the river. The desire for booty and the need of foraging from new sources is always on the agenda of the crusader army. It can be suggested that part, if not all of the crusaders army crossed the river near Moniac and made their way back to Constantinople along the right bank of the river, where conveniently, another old Roman road exists, going straight southeast to Constantinople. Two significant fortresses were on their way.

Okopa

During my many years of work as an archaeologist with the history museum at my home town of Haskovo, and on behalf of the Rhodopica Foundation, which performs its research activities almost exclusively in the Rhodope Mountains, I have been fortunate to participate personally in the field studies and excavations at many sites related to the Crusades.

⁵⁰ Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*, pa. 119. Original Old French text :[...et laissièrent le Vernas à toz les Grex de la terre, et à tot quarante chevaliers que Henris, li bals de l’empire, et li autres barons en Constantinople, et chevauchierent par lor journées tant que il vindrent en Constantinople]. *Chronique de la prise de Constantinople*, Avec Notes et Éclaircissements Par J.A.Buchon, A Paris, Chez Verdière, Libraire, 1828, p.172.

The fortress of Okopa, near the little town of Madjarovo in the Rhodope Mountains is one of them. Okopa is located 754 meters above sea level on a hilltop offering perfect vistas to all points of the compass (Figure 49).



Figure 49. The view from Okopa fortress, looking southeast. The fortress is located on the right bank of River Arda. The river is visible at the background. Image: Private archive of Angel Trendafilov.

Inhabited since antiquity, with finds of imported Athenian pottery dating from 455-445 B.C., the fortress was abandoned somewhere around the first century A.D., when Thrace became a Roman province. In times of peace and tranquility, the population preferred to live in the fertile lands in the deltas of the Arda, Maritza and Tundja rivers. The higher, more inaccessible locations were abandoned, the garrisons moved to the faraway border regions and life in the mountains died away. The same picture can be observed in almost all high mountain fortresses, the only difference being that some of those were repaired in the sixth century, during the reign of Justinian. With regard to the above mentioned Okopa fortress, I can confirm from my personal involvement in the excavations in 1997 that between the cultural layer dating from the fifth century B.C. to the first century A.D., and the next one, from the twelfth century, there is a 120 cm hiatus, a thick layer of soil that contains no cultural traces and is totally dull and unexciting to remove. To compensate for that, the cultural layer dating from the twelfth through the fourteenth century is teeming with interesting finds (Figure 50).



Figure 50. Excavation of Okopa fortress, near the entrance. Boulders from the wall are visible in the baulk. Depth of 4.2m was reached comprised of cultural layers from different epochs. The team used ladder to enter the site. The author of the present thesis is standing at right. Image: Private archive of Angel Trendafilov.

The wall enclosing the only possible point of access into the fortress appears to have been its last defense during a seemingly fierce battle. Within a confined space of some eight square meters, the archaeological team unearthed more than fifteen arrowheads, iron buckles and a spearhead, which are now stored in Historiac Museum Haskovo. The obvious differences between the arrowheads instantly caught the attention of the team. There were two types: one had a square cross section, with four sharp edges, about 8-10 cm in length, and seemed capable of piercing body armour and were most likely designed to be fired from a crossbow (Figure 51); the other were a lot smaller, double-edged, about 3-4 cm long (Figure 52).



Figure 51. Spear or dagger (left) with three crossbow bolts from Okopa fortress, late twelfth-early thirteen century, The scale measure in cm. Image: Angel Trendafilov.



Figure 52. Arrows from Okopa fortress, late twelfth – early thirteenth century. The scale measure in cm. Image: Angel Trendafilov.

The brilliant work of Deyan Rabovyanov with hundreds of crossbow arrows from Bulgaria unequivocally established that crossbows were used only by Western armies until late

fourteenth century.⁵¹ The sizes of the bolts included in the research are between 8-12 cm. and they have similar shape with those found in Okopa. This data is extremely important and helpful in order to reveal events in this fortress.

The access area into the fortress at the main gate was no more than 5 m wide, so the concentration of artefacts found within that space has been impressive. Everything points to a failed assault on the fortress, which is located on the right bank of the river Arda and this stood in the way of the knights of the Fourth Crusade who were coming from the rescue of Renier of Trit. The main excavations took place around the entrance of the fortress. That was the area where the crossbow arrow bolts were found. Several test pits excavated inside the enclosed space of the fortress Okopa yielded parts of buildings without any trace of fire; also, excavations have unearthed later artefacts such as coins and pottery without a trace of knightly presence. An exposed coin of Guy II de la Roche, (1280 – 5 October 1308) duke of Athens, shows that the fortress survived the Fourth Crusade and continued its life until fourteenth century. The lack of destruction and the presence of the bolts only around the main entrance speak volumes. In all appearances, the attempt to conquer the fortress was unsuccessful. This is not surprising. In searching for easy booty, the crusaders did not had the intention to stay long in the area. The fortress is inaccessible to heavily armed knights; it is very likely, therefore, that the crusade army sent lightly armed archers. We have wonderfully written testimony regarding the same mission to *Stenimachos*, that sending archers first was the normal practice of the crusader army:

Geoffrey the Marshal of Roumania and Champagne sent turcoples [soldiers born of a Turkish father and Greek mother] and mounted crossbowmen ahead to ascertain the condition of the castle (*Stenimachos*), they were not sure whether Renier of Trit and his men were dead or alive....⁵²

⁵¹ Деян Рабовянов. *За употребата на арбалета в Средновековна България*. Университетски издателство “Св.св.Кирил и Методий”, Велико Търново, 2010, стр.563-567. Deyan Rabovyanov. *The use of the crossbow in Medieval Bulgaria*. University Press ‘Saint Cyril and Methodius’, Veliko Tarnovo, 2010, pp. 563-567

⁵² Caroline Smith (trans., ed). *Joinville and Villehardouin. Chronicles of the Crusades*. p. 118. Old French text: [Joffrois li mareschaus de Romenie et de Champaigne prist Turcoples et arbalestriers a cheval si les envoia avant por savoir le convine del chastel;qui’il ne savoient se il estoient mort ou vif...’] Villehardouin. *La conquête de Constantinople*; éditée et traduite par Edmond Faral, Société d’édition ‘Les Belles Lettres’, Paris, 1939, II, p.252.

Using this tactic when approaching Stanimak, the crusaders probably did the same at the fortress of Okopa, located on their way back. Villehardouin is silent about this ordeal, but thanks to archaeology we acquire a clearer picture of this campaign. His silence about this battle by Okopa may be a further indication that the crusaders lost: Geoffrey did not have wanted to mention a battle that they failed to win particularly if the loss was in any way shameful. Or perhaps, this was a minor episode from the every day crusaders' life. We also have the example of Malkoto kale fortress and the Parorian monastery, where the crusaders' artefacts shows that, the crusader army tend to use different routes when returning from foraging. Also, regarding Malkoto kale and the Parorian monastery we have Villehardouin's silence. Probably not very proud of the devastation of the Parorian monastery he decided not to include this moment in his book. Off course, it is also possible that he was riding with another military formation. Regarding 'The rescue of Renier of Trit' Villehardouin states that he personally 'sent Turcoples' ahead, which means that he stayed with the core of the military expedition, therefore he cannot describe events where he did not participate. The lack of information about these events is also indicative about the social status inside the crusaders army and their 'day to day' activities. As Natasha Hodgson states: 'He (Villehardouin) emphasised social divisions between the high barons and other good men or knights'.⁵³ The different socio-economical groups in the Fourth Crusade had different obligations and obviously the foraging and the scouting were not part of the duties of the 'high' barons, including Villehardouin. This is another reason why the above described events are missing from the Villehardouin's account. However, thanks to the archaeology we can restore and fit these unknown so far details from the crusaders' every day life to the broader picture of the Fourth Crusade and its consequences and learn more about the military tactics and way of travel of the crusaders army. We can assume with high level of certainty the exact route back of the mission for the rescue of Renier of Trit and the foraging mission to La Ferme and to get even more precise details about the facts, about which Villehardouin was not very garrulous.

Lyutitza

The fortress of Lyutitza is impressive structure located on the right bank of Arda River in Rhodopi Mountains. Such a fortress is hard to be missed (Figure 53).

⁵³ Natasha Hodgson. 'Honour, Shame and the Fourth Crusade'. *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 39. No 2, pp.220-239 (230). DOI: 10.1080/03044181.2013.779297.



Figure 53. Lyutitza fortress, photographed from the air. Image: Silvia Goranova.

If the crusaders from the rescue mission to Stanimac traveled along the right bank of river Arda on their way back, passing by Okopa fortress, they would encounter the fortress of Lyutitza next. Luckily, we have proof that this probably happened. Bony Petrunova, of the National Archaeological Institute and Museum (NAIM), has been in charge of the exploration of the fortress since 2002.⁵⁴ So many valuable finds originate from the Lyutitza fortress that it is not possible to describe all of them within the confines of this paper. But among the artefacts that concern this research are at least ten crusader spurs and hundreds of mediaeval coins and many arrowheads (dating from the eleventh through the fourteenth century). Unfortunately they are not published and there are no photos yet, because the spurs are not of the most attractive finds in Bulgaria with exception of the golden plated spur from Lyutitza, discussed in Chapter VI. The challenges that Bulgarian archaeology is facing were described in Chapter VI, shortly there is no money for publishing. Well, almost. The gold always attracts attention and it is photographed and published first, that is why we have the photo of solid gold ring from the twelfth-thirteenth centuries weighing 13.5 g found in Lyutotza in the year 2011 (Figure 54).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ ‘Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bonny Petrunova, Deputy Director of NAIM-BAS was appointed Deputy Minister of Culture’. Bulgarian National Museum web site. 17.11.2014. Retrived from: <http://naim.bg/en/content/news/600/857/508/>. (Accessed 11.10.2017).

⁵⁵ Bony Petrunova. ‘Golden Ring from Lyutitsa Fortress’. *Contributions to the Bulgarian Archaeology*. Bulgarian Academy of Science, NAIM-BAN, Sofia, vol. 7, 2013, pp.89-99.



Figure 54. Gold ring from Lyutitza fortress, c thirteenth century. Image: Ivaylovgrad Regional Museum.

It proves yet again beyond dispute that this mountain, so inhospitable in the Middle Ages, did have its aristocracy in the times of the crusades. However, from various articles and preliminary information we know about the crusaders spurs found in the fortress of Lyutitza.⁵⁶ From the same sources, we know about a lot of weapons like daggers and arrows. One day when all this will be published and we will determine is there any weapons of Western origin found in Lyutitza. For now, for the purposes of this research, we can safely use the information about the spurs, which are proven to be part from the crusaders equipment. They are yet another evidence for the possible route back along the right bank of river Arda taken by the participants in ‘The rescue of Renier of Trit’. Thus, there are two fortresses, Okopa and Lyutitza, on the right bank of the Arda not mentioned in any written source with evidence for crusaders presence. The rescue mission led by Emperor Henry and described by Villehardouin is the most plausible explanation for the crusaders’ presence in this remote and mountainous area. These finds are valuable addition to Villehardouin’s account and will complement the creation of the much more detailed Map 5 at the end of this chapter.

⁵⁶ ‘180 Монети откриха на Лютица’, 16.10.2014; ‘180 coins found at Lyutitza’. Information web site for Haskovo and the region, www.haskovo.info. Retrieved from: <http://haskovo.info/29114/>. (Accessed 05.05.2018)

Another exceptional archaeological find related to 'The rescue of Renier of Trit' mission was found just 10 km from the fortress of *Stenimachos*, in the modern-day village of Gornoslav. 'The Gornoslav hoard' consisted of 786 Byzantine gold 'perpera' coins found in copper vessel by farmers during plowing in 1961.⁵⁷ The coins are made from twenty-one carat gold, extremely well preserved, most of them never circulated. They were collected for more than over 100 years; the earliest coins are from Alexius I Komnenos (1081- 1118) and the latest are from Isaac II Angelos (1185-1195). The hoard is known to the world and was mistakenly attributed to the Third Crusade.⁵⁸ The hoard was hidden or lost after year 1195 (the latest coin as *terminus ante quem*) when the danger from the Third Crusade was long gone. Most likely this amazing treasure belonged to a very wealthy family, collected from few generations residing in *Stenimachos*. Facing the danger of Renier of Trit and his knights during their thirteen months in the fortress, probably the owners were forced to hide the treasure at 10 km south from the fortress smuggling the treasure through the city gates. Another possible theory is that they lost the coins (or the owners were killed) during a panicked escape due to Renier's arrival. There is another interesting detail about this hoard. From 786 gold coins, only nine were collected between the years 1182 and 1195. The vast majority of 779 gold coins were collected prior 1182 when the life in this Byzantine province was peaceful. This corresponds with the archaeological data for the settlement structure, as discussed in Chapter VII. The hard times around and after the Third Crusade caused significant struggle for the owners of this treasure, resulting minimal addition of gold coins between 1182 and 1195. No coins were added after 1195, obviously showing financial difficulties. The end of an era for this family was caused by the Fourth Crusade and the capture of *Stenimachos* in 1205.

Marriage far away from home

⁵⁷ Христо Джамбов. 'Новооткрито съкровище от златни монети при с.Горнославо, Пловдивско'. *Археология*, том.3, БАН, София, 1961 г., кн.4, с.1-5. Hristo Djambov. 'Newfound treasure from golden coins in Gornoslav, Plovdiv region'. *Archaeology magazine*, vol.3, Bulgarian Academy of Science, Sofia, 1961, book 4, pp.1-5

⁵⁸ M.F.Hendi. 'The Gornoslav hoard, the Emperor Frederick I, and the Monastery of Bachkovo'. Philip Grierson(ed.). *Studies in Numismatic Method*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 179-191.

There are a couple of finds with undisputable Western origin not directly related to Villehardouin's book. Still, they can provide a direct link to the other written sources from the era and thus complement, substantiate or disprove the claims made therein

The first find originates from Bratzigovo, the wide area of Philipopolis, deep in Rhodopi Mountains. Found in 1927, this is definitely a part of a knight's suit of chain-mail armour (Figure 55).⁵⁹

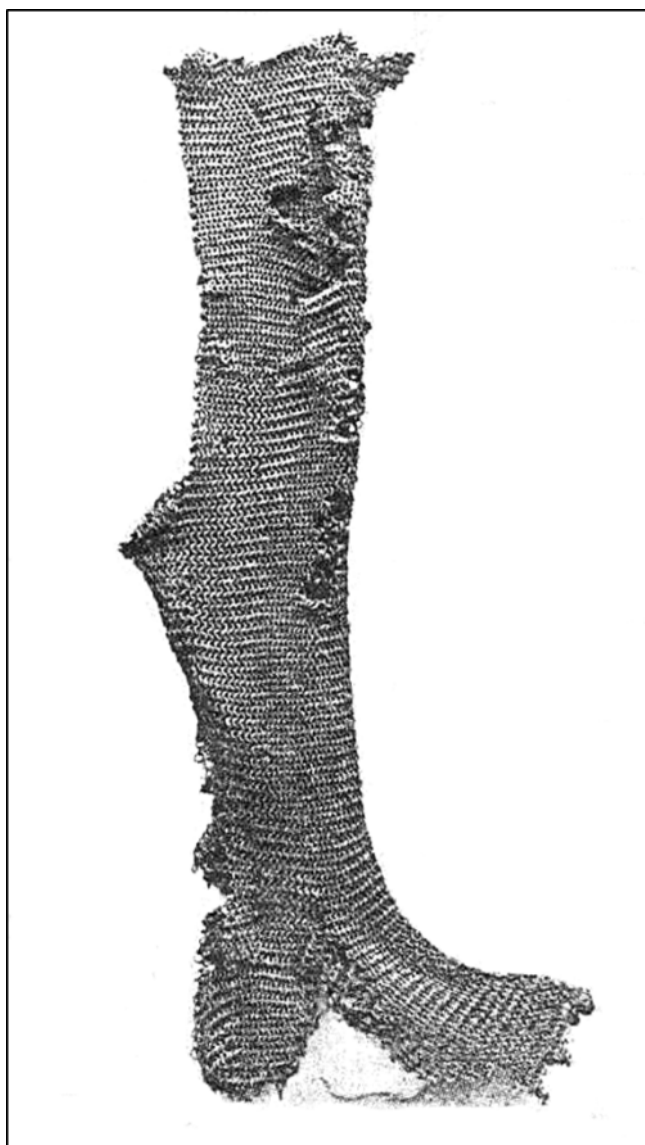


Figure 55. Chain mail defensive armour from Bratzigovo, late twelfth – early thirteenth century. Image: Deyan Rabovyanov.

⁵⁹ Deyan Rabovyanov, Stanimir Dimitrov. 'European Armour from Medieval Bulgaria (12–15 c.)'. *The Fairest Meadows on the World: Crusades and Crusaders on the Balkans*, 07.11.2013. Unpublished Conference paper, Veliko Tarnovo University. Conference program: http://www.academia.edu/5287563/Conference_Program_Crusades_and_Crusaders_in_the_Balkans (Accessed 12.05.2018). My sincere thanks to Dr. Deyan Rabovyanov for providing me with this unpublished paper and the photos from the conference.

The artifact represents a leg defence made of iron links and known in literature as *chausses*.⁶⁰ By the middle of the twelfth century, mail *chausses* were far more common than they had been a century before.⁶¹ The length of this item is 84 cm, the length of the foot 30 cm, the width of the upper preserved end 28 cm, and the weight is 3.7 kg. It was crafted from links of 0.9 cm in diameter and a thickness of 0.2 cm. Originally the legs were hidden behind pieces of metal chain-mail which only covered their front - the one turned towards the enemy. By the middle of the twelfth century, it developed into 'socks' attached to a leather belt worn beneath the warrior's chain-mail.⁶² The example from Bratzigovo is from late twelfth and early thirteenth century. Bratzigovo is a town located some 40 km from the city of Philipopolis and 58 km from *Stenimachos*. *Stenimachos* was conquered by the knights of the Third Crusade and the Fourth Crusade and Renier of Trit spend thirteen months there. So, such protective gear, certainly of Western origin, probably is associated with the raids made by the knights of the Third Crusade in the area during foraging or belongs to someone from Renier of Trit's entourage, not to forget the fact, that they were besieged.

Another plausible explanation of the *chausses* found in Bratzigovo is that it was found along the route to the fortress of Tzepina to the village of Dorkovo, in the Rhodope Mountains described by Henry of Valenciennes. The French chronicler describes the wedding between the Bulgarian boyar Alexius Slav, nephew of the fearsome Kaloyan, and the twelve-year-old illegitimate daughter of Emperor Henry, Marguerite-Isabella:

When the news for Esclas's arrival came, the Emperor went out to greet him. After this, they together went back to Constantinople and the Emperor gave him his wife. And there is no question: there was a lot of joy and happiness. There were plenty of all things, more than anyone's desires, for the happiness of the people's hearts, sprinkled like a fountain. Thus, Esclas spent a whole week in Constantinople and then left the Emperor together with his wife. The Emperor honour him a lot and escorted him quite far with huge retinue.⁶³

⁶⁰ Pantaloon (French). Tight-fitting protective foot garment or chain-mail leggings. See: Kelly DeVries, Robert Douglas Smith. *Medieval Military Technology*. University of Toronto Press, North York Ontario, 2012, p.70.

⁶¹ David Edge, John Miles Paddock. *Arms & Armor of the Medieval Knight: An Illustrated History of Weaponry in the Middle Ages*. Crescent, New York, 1998, p.45

⁶² Claude Blair. *European Armour. Circa 1066 to circa 1700*. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1959, pp. 28-29.

⁶³ Joseph Fr. Michaud. *Nouvelle collection des mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de France, depuis le XIIIe siècle jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe: précédés de notices pour caractériser chaque auteur des mémoires et son époque, suivis de l'analyse des documents historiques qui s'y rapportent*. Geoffroy de Ville-Hardouin, Henri de

Having received Henry's blessing in Constantinople, boyar Alexius Slav returned together with his bride and a suite of courtiers to the unconquerable fortress of Tzepina, tucked away deep in the Rhodope Mountains (Figure 56).



Figure 56. Tzepina fortress is well preserved, built c. ninth century. Image: Tzoncho Kanev.

Therefore, it is possible that the chainmail leggings belonged to a member of the suite accompanying the newlyweds in 1208. For sure, there were Western knights and servants accompanying Marguerite-Isabella along the way to Tzepina. But it is not only the *chausses* found outside the walls, there is more evidence for crusaders presence found in Tzepina fortress! Today the fortress is still in very good shape. It is situated on a cone-shaped hill, 1,136 m above sea level. The route was arduous and the stretch beyond the city of Philippopolis was little used, because of the difficult terrain and the danger of ambushes. From the inner area of the fortress originates a western sword and chain-mail shirt found accidentally at the beginning

Valenciennes, Joinville, Pierre Sarrasins, Duguesclin. Christine de Pisan. Chez L' éditeur du commentaire analytique du code civil, Paris, 1836, p.128-129. Original Old French text from Henri de Valenciennes: ['Quand l'empereur ouit la nouvelle qu' Esclas venoit, il alla à sa rencontre, et tous deux vinrent à Constantinoble, ou il fit épouser sa fille à Esclas; et s'il y eut assez de fête et de joie, c'est ce qui n'est pas à demander, car il y eut aussi grande abundance de tous biens que si ou les eyût puisés en une fontaine. Ensi demoura Esclas en Consatinoble toute celle semaine, et puis se partied l'empereur atoute sa feme. Li empereres li fist tout l'hounour que fere li pot, et le convoia une grant piece à toute sa gent.']. My English translation.

of the twentieth century (Figure 57). Unfortunately, they are displayed, but have never been published.



Figure 57. Western sword, chain mail shirt and maces found in Tzepina fortress, late twelfth-early thirteen century. Displayed at Tzepina Hut near the fortress. Image: Pazardjik Historical Museum.

The distance between the site where the chainmail *chausses* were found (Bratzigovo) and the Tzepina fortress is only about 20 km as the crow flies, and about 40 km using the most convenient, if circuitous, route. This makes the hypothesis that the leg armour, the sword and the chain mail belonged to someone from the security detail of boyar Alexius Slavand Marguerite-Isabella all the more credible.

Significantly, the three possible events for the date of the *chausses* from Bratzigovo – the fall of *Stenimachos* in 1189, the siege of Renier of Trit in *Stenimachos* 1205-1206 and the marriage of boyar Alexius Slavand Marguerite-Isabella and their route back to Tzepina – were separated in time by a mere nineteen years, 1189 until 1208 – a relative brief period of time that reinforces the accurate dating of the artefact. The sword and the chainmail shirt found

inside Tzepina fortress almost certainly belongs to someone from Marguerite-Isabella's companions. There are no other records for Western presence between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries in this remote fortress in Rhodopi Mountains. In this respect the presence of the Western spurs and crossbow bolts in Lyutitza and Okopa probably is not related to the return trip of boyar Alexius Slav and his companions crusaders. The newlyweds had peaceful journey from Constantinople to Tzepina most likely using the Roman road on the right bank of Arda River. This road was used a year ago by the returning crusaders who participated in the mission 'The rescue of Renier of Trit' as it was explained above and depicted in Map 4. It is very unlikely for the crusaders from the escort of Alexius Slav and Marguerite-Isabella to organise a military attack with crossbows of Okopa for example. Their number probably was not great and they were aware that such an attack can spark adequate military response from the besieged and put in risk the life of Marguerite-Isabella. This was an escort mission not a military one. And last but not least: boyar Alexius Slav was a significant independent ruler in the Rhodopi Mountains, and this was the main reason for his marriage with the daughter of Emperor Henry. The fortresses of Lyutitza and Okopa are tucked deep into the Rhodopi Mountains (especially Okopa) and most likely were under Alexius' control, which excludes a possible attack during his return to Tzepina. Alexius Slav was successful ruler in the Rhodopi Mountains for twenty years.⁶⁴ During his rule in the Rhodopi Mountains, the territory and the power of the Latin Empire significantly decreased and there is no record or evidence of Latin military campaigns in the areas of Lyutitza, Okopa, and Tzepina. This is indirect evidence that the presence of the crossbow bolts in Okopa and the spurs in Lyutitza is related to the 'Rescue of Renier of Trit' mission and in particular to its not very well documented way back to Constantinople.

The examples presented above prove that the connection between artefacts and written sources actually turns out to be quite fruitful and valuable. There can hardly be a more reliable way of verifying the writings of the ancient authors than matching them to a piece of material evidence, which is also the perfect tool for complementing what's written in the sources, as can be seen from the following example. While Map 4 was created only on the basis of written sources supported by archaeological artefacts and the data for the old Roman roads which is also subject of archaeological research, Map 5 combines every possible archaeological artefact with relation with the Third and the Fourth Crusades, excluding the lead seals, because they

⁶⁴ Tchavdar Marinov. 'Constructing Bulgarian Heritage: The nationalisation of Byzantine and Otoman architecture of Melnik'. *A Balkan Heritages: Negotiating History and Culture*, Maria Couroucli, Tchavdar Marinov (eds.). Routledge, London and New York 2016, p.94.

are not proof of crusaders' presence. Thanks to all these finds we are able to enrich and confirm the information left by Villehardouin in his book and in particular the three military campaigns in the Bulgarian territory and can confirm Henry of Valenciennes' account for boyar Alexius Slav's marriage. The enormous gold hoard found in Gornoslav near Stanimac is another telling example for the uncertainty of the life around 1190-1204. New locations with crusaders' presence (Blisme, Apolonia Pontika, Malkoto kale, Paronian monastery, Mezek, Okopa, Lyutitza, Bratigovo, Tzepina) are also added and the network of the routes used by the crusaders is updated accordingly. As a result of this research, Map 5 (Figure 58 and Figure 59) was made.

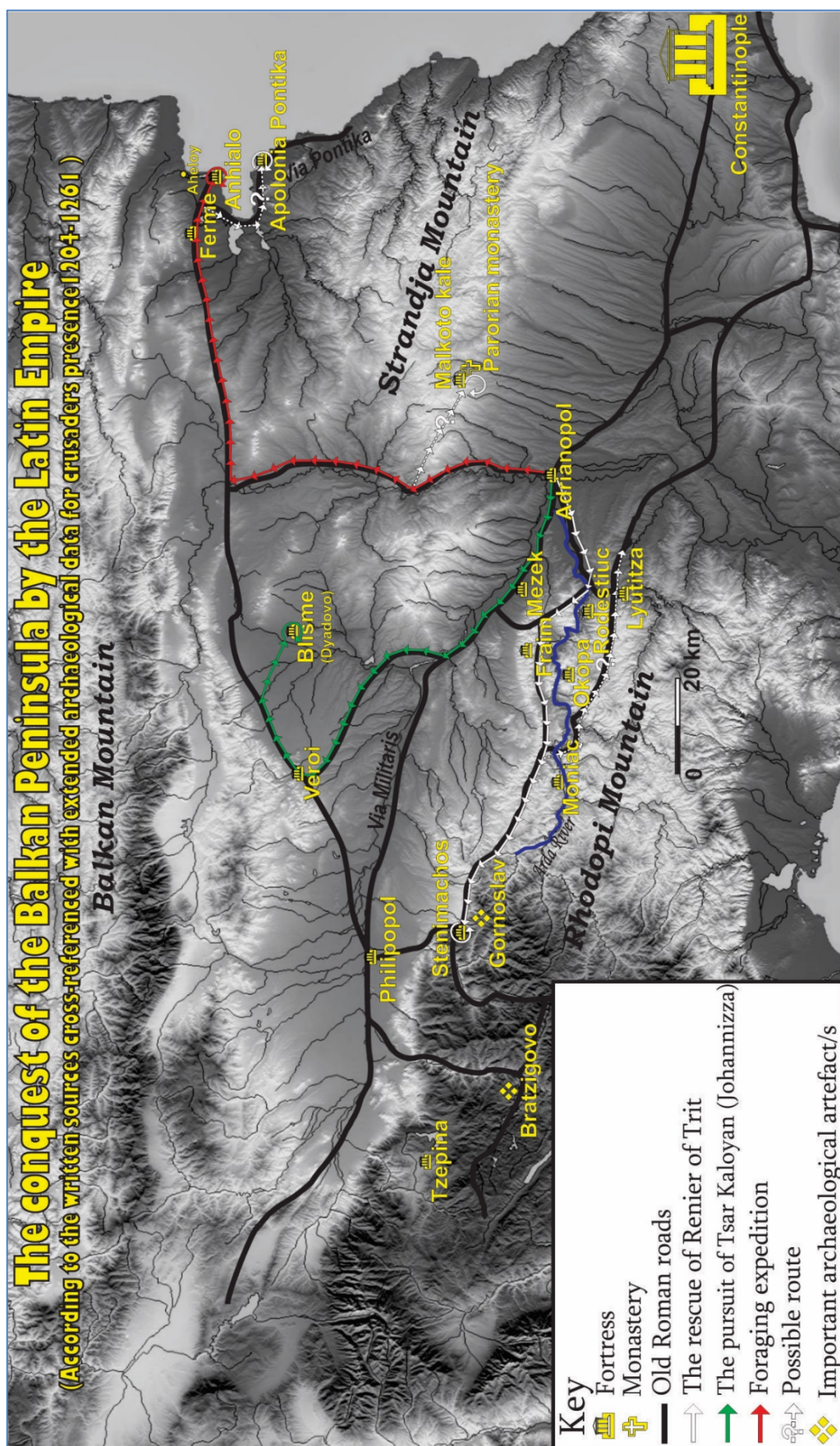


Figure 58. Map 5, based on written sources cross-referenced with all available archaeological data. Created by Angel Trendafilov.

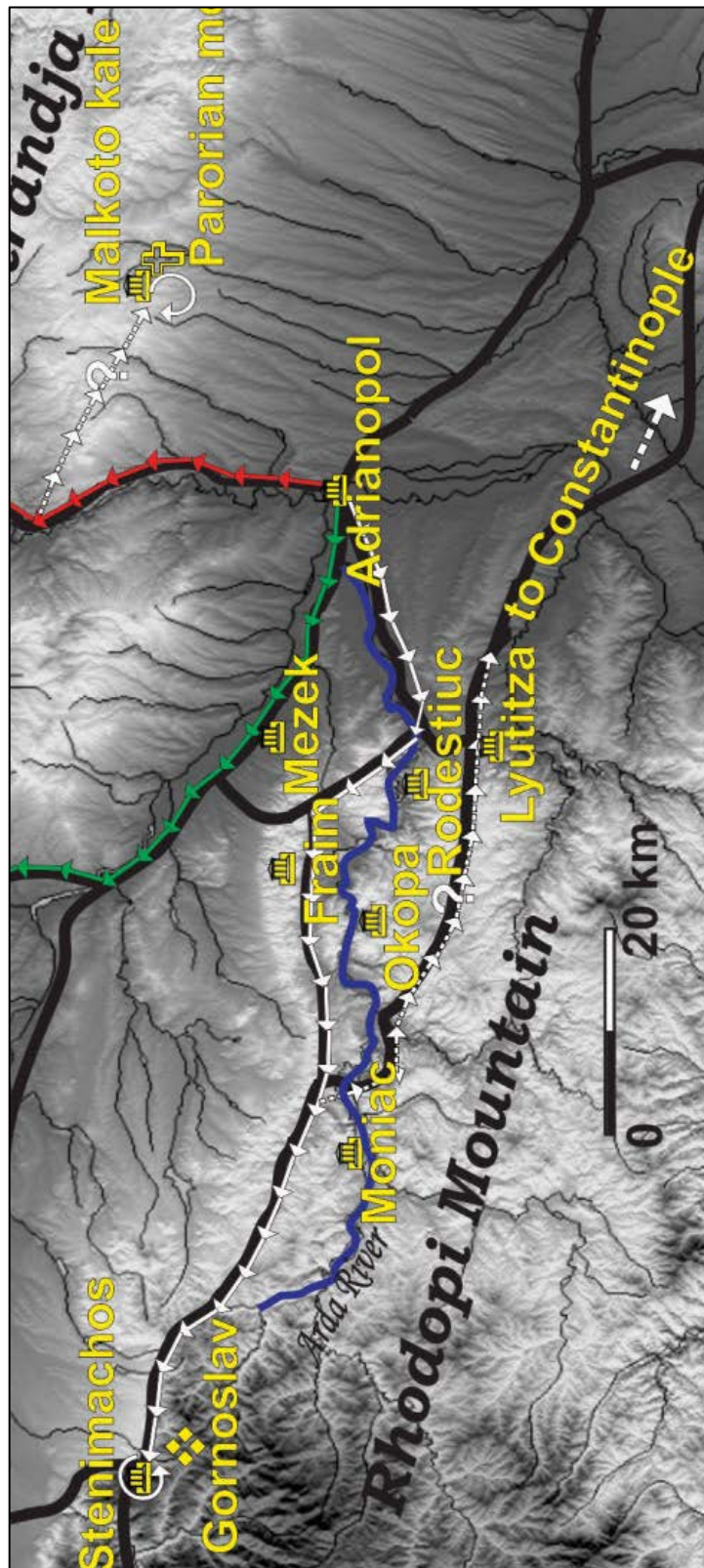


Figure 59. Detail of Map 5, showing the mission to rescue of Renier of Trit and its possible route back. Created by Angel Trendafilov.

The details provided by Map 5 are significantly more. They are the result of cross-referencing of written sources with archaeological data including a technological-chronographical analysis of weapons and the military equipment, the data from the stratigraphic layers and evidence for catastrophic events that left traces on the fortresses' walls and citadels. And while the most respected scholars are assuming how far they can go based on the traditional historical research saying, 'We have tried, as far as possible to march along with (the crusaders), to become observers of their councils, to view events as they saw them',⁶⁵ the results from Part II of this study actually put the reader in the saddle of the crusaders, while galloping along eastern Thrace and the Rhodopi Mountains' fortresses and settlements, proving the assumed, finding new evidence for events long forgotten, and going a step further from the doorstep of the library.

Conclusion

As a participant in field observations and archaeological excavations, I have worked at or toured all of the above-mentioned fortresses. Many are indeed located in difficult-to-access locations, making their exploration difficult and costly. Even to this day, there is no road leading to the Okopa fortress and we were forced to climb up a steep hill for over an hour to reach our destination, carrying with us the necessary gear and plenty of drinking water. The situation is similar at Lyutitza, Rodestiuck, and a number of other fortresses that exist but have never been mentioned in written sources. Virtually every convenient hilltop in the Rhodope Mountains has been fortified and inhabited at some point over the centuries. My personal observations during site visits tell me that many of these sites were actively used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However, more archaeological excavations need to be done.

Financial constraints have a dual negative impact on the pursuit of archaeological research on the Fourth Crusade in Bulgaria. First, there are not enough funds to support routine archaeological excavations at hard-to-reach sites. Bulgarian archaeologists are lucky to have a choice of subjects for exploration, from Neolithic sites through ancient Greek colonies and Roman cities and castles to Ottoman sites, all located at convenient and easily-accessible locations. Therefore, financial support for research on remote mountaintops always comes second. Second, some of the medieval fortresses mentioned in written sources overlap with the sites of modern towns, such as Philipopolis, Verei, Aquilo, Thermopolis, Apollonia Pontika,

⁶⁵ D.E.Queller, T.F. Madden. *The Fourth Crusade: The conquest of Constantinople*. 2nd edition, University of Pensilvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997, pp.18, ix.

and part of *Stenimachos*. Research in these locations is extremely difficult due to the tons of asphalt and concrete often atop of such sites. The remaining intact but inaccessible mountain strongholds grant information sparingly in exchange for big efforts. Still, the information from archaeological artefacts and information that we have found thus far greatly enriches our knowledge of the period. Most of the fortresses discussed above have been at least partially excavated, whereas there are many sites – dozens of them, without exaggeration, in the Rhodope Mountains alone – that remain unnamed and have never been the subject of any formal archaeological work. There will come a time when artefacts and information hidden deep under these fortresses will become available to the scholarly community, unveiling secrets and confirming or rejecting hypotheses related to the crusades. However, once a site is partially explored, it can take years or even decades for the finds to be published. This is a major impediment to the research process and deprives the scholarly community of a chance to analyse the raw data. Still, the information collected thus far, despite these obstacles, has proven quite telling and gives us a chance to discuss the Fourth Crusade on a whole new level.

Conclusion

This thesis aims to draw the attention of the academic community to little known facts about the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire derived from primary sources which, up until recently, have remained hidden from historians and the public at large. This is essentially a study that mixes two distinct types of sources: Orthodox-Slavonic written sources and archaeological data from the period of the Fourth Crusade. Used in conjunction with well-known Western and Byzantine sources, this approach enables the thesis to bring into focus details of this particular crusade while at the same time bringing out into the open a host of new information regarding its consequences. In addition, it enables us to better understand the intricate interplay of diplomacy and military of the Latin Empire with its adversaries. The choice of topic has been dictated by some clear gaps in the historiography, which I outline in the introduction and in the first chapter and by the author's personal participation in archaeological excavations in territories either encompassed in or affected by the Fourth Crusade and Latin Empire.

A number of important questions were raised and answered in this thesis. For example, new attention was drawn to the significance of the religious background of the Fourth Crusade and, in particular the Great Schism of 1054. While the events leading up to the crusade were certainly not a mystery to the academic community, the use of Orthodox-Slavonic written sources enabled this subject to be examined from a completely new angle. Archaeology, on the other hand, helped find the answer to an important but under-explored question: what were the actual consequences for the Orthodox-Slavonic states of the Fourth Crusade and the fall of Constantinople, as well as the ensuing wars for the territory of the disintegrating Byzantine Empire? A key goal of this thesis was to establish what archaeological data exist in the territory of modern-day Bulgaria that is directly relevant to the Fourth Crusade and Latin Empire. Such archaeological artefacts enabled the exploration of a number of unknown aspects of the history of the Fourth Crusade. The thesis explored how this new evidence fits into the picture of the crusade established in the known written sources and what part this data can play in developing a new understanding of the history of the crusades and their impact.

These are the main directions in which this study sought to find answers to the many still outstanding questions concerning the Fourth Crusade and Latin Empire. In the process of this research, many additional details have crystallised, many lesser questions have been answered, and some logical solutions to issues have been suggested. For greater precision, this study was divided into two parts, the first focused upon written sources and the second on

archaeological data. The two halves often interacted with each other by exchanging facts and ideas and creating a strong basis for in-depth research.

The first part of this thesis focused largely on little-known Orthodox-Slavonic written sources as well as some Latin texts. In both cases, several written sources were presented with the first English translations. There are doubtless challenges in working with extinct languages such as Orthodox-Slavonic and Latin. The information derived from such sources, specifically about the background to the Fourth Crusade, its consequences, and the fate of the Latin Empire formed in its aftermath, is complete and valuable enough to contribute on its own to the currently available body of knowledge while also presenting a fresh perspective on the subject. More than twenty-five Orthodox-Slavonic written sources with direct links to the Fourth Crusade were used for the first time in this research, which has no analogue in either Western or Eastern historiography. Among the knowledge that has been supplemented as a result of this thorough and detailed analysis is more irrefutable evidence that cracks between the Eastern and Western Church began to appear at least two centuries before the Great Schism, as described in the Orthodox-Slavonic written sources referenced in Chapter II. These texts revealed the profound distrust between the Papacy and Constantinople and the fight for dominance between the two, which resulted in the Fourth Crusade. Indeed, focussing on the root causes of the schism of 1054 is a way to understand both the reasons for and the consequences of the Fourth Crusade. The schism was shown through lesser-known Orthodox-Slavonic sources as the rationale and justification for the capture of Constantinople. The importance of the reasons leading to the schism is often underappreciated by Western historians but it is crucial to the understanding of the later events that led up to Fourth Crusade.

Chapter III examined the reaction of the Orthodox-Slavonic peoples to the loss of their spiritual capital, Constantinople, and the ensuing plunder of hundreds of priceless church relics. This perspective – the impact of the crusade on the locality – is practically absent from Western historiography. The discovery in these sources of the existence of counter-persecutions, such as the banishments and executions of Catholics in Serbia and Bulgaria, is evidence of a deep rift that existed between Catholic and Orthodox Christians. The proclamation of the Byzantine military commander Nicholas as emperor is also a valuable addition to our understanding of the history of the Fourth Crusade. His ‘kingdom’ may have only lasted a mere six days before he was captured by Alexius V Mourtzouphlus, but it is a fact showing the level of knowledge and accuracy of the Slavic choricler.

Chapter IV presented the diplomatic exchanges that led to Bulgaria being co-opted into the family of Catholic nations in the turbulent year 1204. It did so by considering the

motivations of all stakeholders in the events surrounding and following the Fourth Crusade. The fact that Bulgaria was a Catholic country at the time of the fall of Constantinople is ignored by the majority of researchers, yet it is key to our understanding of the general policy that Pope Innocent III tried to pursue in the Balkans. The conflict between papal policy and that of the Latin Emperor with respect to Bulgaria provided suitable ground for some truly artful diplomacy in which religious motivations were not always at the forefront of negotiations. The savage war that the Bulgarian king Kaloyan waged on the Latin Empire at the same time that he corresponded with Innocent and dispatched monks to receive training in Rome was indicative of the conflicting policies that directed the Bulgarian state. The letters of Kaloyan and the pope's responses, along with the letters of the Latin Emperor Henry, constitute a primary source of enormous significance, from which we learn how Bulgaria became Catholic and why. They also tell us how Innocent pleaded with Kaloyan to release from his dungeons Latin Emperor Baldwin I while simultaneously supporting Kaloyan after the Battle of Adrianople in 1205, accepting the Bulgarian king's argument that he was simply defending his lands. These overlooked letters are truly priceless sources of new information: in one, the Emperor Henry writes about potential coalition between Kaloyan and the Turks, while in another he described Kaloyan's ruthless manner of engaging his opponent in battle and calls him 'an enemy of the Holy Cross'. These letters show the enormous discrepancy between the strategies of the Holy See and the reality on the battlefield, where linguistic refinement took a back seat to the thirst for conquest and destruction. In a similar vein, the letters exchanged between Popes Gregory IX and Innocent IV with the Bulgarian kings who ruled after 1235, in which the former pleaded for the return of Bulgaria to the Catholic fold, were indicative of how the papal plan for religious dominance was wrecked by regional infighting and mutual intolerance between Catholic and Orthodox Christians. This epistolary wealth reveals the secrets of the policies of the Latin Empire, the Holy See, and Bulgaria during the thirteenth century and most of them have never been translated into English before. Their consideration and translation in this thesis, therefore, greatly adds to Western historiography.

Chapter V, concerned with the consequences of the disintegration of Byzantium and the squabbles between the resulting statelets for the throne of Constantinople, sought to shed light on the deep crisis into which this part of the world was plunged during the first half of the thirteenth century as a result of the Fourth Crusade. Furthermore, it drew attention to the mutual animosity and infighting amongst the Orthodox-Slavonic nations for the right to inherit Byzantium, as well as the passive attitude of the local Greek population of Constantinople toward the Latins. The alliance concluded in 1235 between Bulgaria and the Empire of Nicaea

and the return of Bulgaria to the Orthodox faith were not purely religious acts; rather, they were primarily aimed at the political and territorial annihilation of the Latin Empire. Similarly, the futile appeals of the pope to the king of Hungary to lead a crusade against the Bulgarian king, referred to by the pontiff as ‘Asen the Schismatic’, were not merely another attempt by the Catholic Church to achieve religious dominance in the Balkans but also a diversion that sought to turn Bulgaria’s attention toward the West and weaken its pressure on the relatively weak Latin Empire. The question over whether Thessaloniki, the second largest city in the Byzantine and Latin Empire, was annexed to the Bulgarian kingdom was also proved in this chapter through the use of newly discovered coins and an Orthodox-Slavonic source that bears the signature of the Bulgarian king.

The analysis of the facts found in these little-known Orthodox-Slavonic and Latin written sources provides a basis for discussion that is quite different from what the academic world has used to the present and pushes the limits of what is known about the Fourth Crusade, the motives of those involved, and its impact. While it is possible that the religious motive was the leading cause for the earlier three crusades, in respect to the Fourth Crusade, it is safe to assume that religious motivations were not a decisive factor for either of the parties involved. Instead, a whole spectrum of other motives has been identified. From the diversion of the route of the Crusade towards the city of Zara, via the cash reward promised by the heir to the Byzantine throne for the capture of Constantinople, the oscillation of Bulgaria between Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, the crushing defeat inflicted upon the Eastern Orthodox Despotate of Epirus by those same Bulgarians, to the political-cum-religious alliance of 1235 against the Latin Empire and the passivity of the indigenous Greek population of Constantinople – there is a whole spectrum of other motives to be identified as setting in motion events.

Alongside shedding new light on the question of motive, the background story and the consequences of the Fourth Crusade the analysis of overlooked sources discloses some previously unknown details, such as the first direct confirmation by Patriarch Euthymius of the death in Bulgarian custody of the Latin Emperor Baldwin I, evidence of persecutions of Catholics in the territory of Serbia and Bulgaria, and a record of the assault on and subsequent razing to the ground of the Orthodox monastery of Zograph in 1275 at the hands of the Latins. All these events are described from the perspectives of Orthodox-Slavonic peoples. This thesis has provided an opportunity to interpret and integrate this new body of written evidence into the story of the Fourth Crusade. By so doing, we gain a much broader understanding of the motivations of all participants in these events and the results of their actions.

The second part of this study focussed on archaeological findings from the time of the crusades and their interpretation. This proved to be quite a challenge, and not only because no such research had been conducted before. There were administrative, technical, legal, and financial obstacles to overcome in order to gather all the relevant information. All of these challenges are described in Chapter VI, where I also establish why using archaeological data is important to historians of the crusades. A telling example of this made by a leading historian is from Jonathan Riley-Smith, who acknowledges that a visit to the sites described in relation to the crusades and the findings of archaeological excavations at those sites have changed his perspective.¹ In the case of the Fourth Crusade and its archaeological evidence, the aim of the second part of this thesis is to analyse the archaeological data and introduce it into the historical debate in a way never attempted before. Despite Riley-Smith's concession that archaeology is important in many other studies, no archaeological evidence has been used in histories of the Fourth Crusade. It is impossible in the twenty-first century for an historical study of the crusades to claim any level of thoroughness without the use of this source of data. It is this void that determined the direction of the second part of this thesis. The data collected, an overwhelming part of which has never been published, was made available due to my personal contacts with the discoverers of the artefacts and the museums where they are stored, as well as through my participation in a number of excavations at relevant locations. While I recognise that grounding any analysis in published and fully documented archaeological reports would be preferable, the unique circumstances facing Bulgarian archaeological investigation make this impossible and necessitate compromises. A consequence of the approach adopted here is that all assessments remain 'provisional' until such a time that a full scientific analysis of the artefacts is possible. Nonetheless, the task of providing a preliminary assessment gives the academic community exciting new facts and data concerning the Fourth Crusade.

Based on archaeological evidence, Chapter VII answered a key question: what were the actual consequences of the Fourth Crusade for the territory of the former Byzantine Empire? The data concerning dozens of razed or abandoned settlements and fortresses in these territories in the early thirteenth century is indicative of almost total annihilation, which is supported by evidence of mass migration of populations to high mountain fortresses and other areas beyond the zones of military conflict. This information fits well with data from written sources that describe the devastation that befell these territories as a result of the Fourth Crusade. Thus, by

¹ Jonathan Riley-Smith. *The Crusades: A History*. Second edition, Continuum, 2005, p.80

comparing events described in the written sources with archaeological evidence, we can confirm both the extent of the destruction and the reliability of the written sources.

The uniqueness of artefacts of Western origin and the fact that they have been discovered in stratigraphic layers within the territory of the Balkans provides an excellent opportunity for a more in-depth study tracing the movements of the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade. The exact locations where such artefacts were unearthed are of exceptional significance for substantiating the information that we derive from written sources and for reconstructing events that these sources neglect to mention. Chapter VIII offers a case study in the value of applying archaeological data to crusader history in the Balkans. It provides an opportunity by using data from intensive archaeological explorations and field research in Bulgaria to trace the actual routes of the crusader army in their mission to rescue Renier of Trit from *Stenimachos* and their punitive expedition deep into Bulgarian territory on behalf of the Latin Empire. Moreover, evidence of a Latin presence has been discovered at fortresses and settlements never mentioned in a single written source of the period, including at Mezek, Lyutitza, Okopa, Malkoto kale, Paronian monastery and Apollonia Pontica. This data contribute to a much more detailed and credible reconstruction of the movements of the crusader army and to our understanding of the preferred reconnaissance and military tactics and general conduct of the army in deeply hostile territory. It is thanks to such archaeological evidence that it is possible to locate populated areas mentioned in the writings of Villehardouin such as Blisme, which had remained previously unidentified. New archaeological data also adds to the existing information that we have about Roman roads. At first glance, the latter may seem far removed from the time of the crusades, but these were the only routes fit for travel, especially in the wooded areas of the Rhodope Mountains. Combining this data with existing information about Roman roads allows for the reconstruction of the routes taken in the Third and Fourth Crusades. This information logically provides a point of reference for the creation of two detailed maps that both illustrates and substantiates the actual events that occurred during the Fourth Crusade. The differences in precision between a map compiled only using written sources and one which integrates archaeological evidence is clear. In addition, archaeology has many other exciting facts to offer, such as the discovery of lead seals testifying to intensive correspondence between the Latin Empire, Bulgaria, and the three Greek statelets; the troves of coins unearthed as evidence of brisk trade and *terminus post quem* of the existence of a settlement; the types of armaments used by the various factions; the horse rider's spurs and body armour found at some unusual places – all of these reveal the lifestyle of and the challenges facing those who lived in the Balkans in the thirteenth century.

By using archaeological data, it is possible to establish that the veracity of descriptions by Ansbert, Geoffroy de Villehardouin, and some Orthodox-Slavonic sources is extremely high and that the assertions they make can be corroborated by archaeological evidence. This provides historians with a hitherto unavailable level of assurance when working with such written sources. There is no excuse in the twenty-first century for overlooking the wealth of archaeological data that, in its great diversity, supplements, confirms, or refutes existing conventional wisdom on matters of history. Nonetheless, scholars face obstacles of a different nature than mentioned above, the primary being that most archaeological data from Bulgaria remains unpublished. But such challenges simply require historians to define 'research' as a gathering of evidence from different fields, which thereby creates interdisciplinary bridges and a whole new level of confidence among scholars. For example, archaeology proves beyond doubt that Church architecture during Bulgaria's Catholic period remained Orthodox. This is of major importance when we try to understand the politics and diplomacy of Bulgaria and its relationship to the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire. In addition, the fact that the Bulgarian king Kaloyan was buried without the royal crown and sceptre conferred upon him by the pope indicates the enormous discrepancy between the preserved written sources and the 'facts on the ground'. In the latter two cases, the archaeological evidence currently available disproves the impression given in written sources. Complete reliance on written sources would, therefore, lead researchers to wrong conclusions. However, in addition to refuting elements of written accounts, archaeological evidence has the power to reinforce accurate information contained in these writings, which lends them credibility and allows for their correct interpretation and inclusion in the reconstruction of historical facts. Such a reconstruction by means of cross-referencing between written sources and archaeological evidence might prove useful to many scholars in their future projects and in efforts to determine what exactly happened in any given period of time. Indeed, this 'mixed methodology' approach can work for any historical research that relies primarily on written sources. If this thesis prompts even a single leading scholar of the crusades to take a more active interest in archaeological data and different written sources before publishing his or her next book, it will be a small step in the right direction because, as was emphasised above, the advantages of this approach are clear. This study, however, highlights the need for further research in the territories affected by the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire. Fellow archaeologists and historians from Greece, Turkey, and as far afield as Syria could collate and present in a systematic manner all known finds relevant to the Fourth Crusade and thereby expand and supplement the historical image created here. This may be an arduous and time-consuming task that may pose many challenges and risks. For the moment,

perhaps only Greece and Bulgaria can offer favourable opportunities for a scholar to explore this topic without concerns for their personal security. Syria, due to the war, the destruction of unique cultural monuments, and the redrawing of borders, is a place where opportunities for conducting archaeological research are reduced to zero. In Turkey, meanwhile, researchers are severely restricted on account of the growing hostility towards foreigners and government restrictions regarding archaeological excavations. Regrettably, attempts to redraw borders are not only confined to Syria but appear in Eastern Europe as well. As recently as 2017, the Bulgarian government expelled Turkish nationals who had been working for the secession of Bulgarian territories and their accession to Turkey.² The territories in question are located in the Rhodope Mountains and are currently the home to a small Turkish remnant population that dates to the time of the Ottoman Empire. It was here that the archaeological component of this research was primarily conducted, specifically the fortresses at Mezek, Lyutitza, Rodestitza, Fraim, Moniac, *Stenimachos*, Okopa, and a few others located in the area. Consequently, it was here that some of the most compelling archaeological evidence for the presence and movements of the crusaders was discovered. Surely these fortresses, scattered around the Rhodope Mountains, hide many more exciting artefacts that, if discovered, could contribute to future studies of the Fourth Crusade. But if these territories are annexed by Turkey, this would render such research nearly impossible.

The fact that the crusades have been a painful subject for over 800 years should be an incentive for – rather than a hurdle preventing – their continued examination from all possible angles. There is ample potential for such studies, although challenges abound. But the quest for historical truth and an accurate reconstruction of the past is the task that researchers face in the twenty-first century. It would be to everybody's advantage if fellow historians and archaeologists were to begin cooperating more closely to attain those goals. And, hopefully, the results of this research will stimulate this kind of collaboration.

Regardless of whether a reader has skimmed through the obligatory list of authoritative writings on the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire, works such as those by Jonathan Phillips, Thomas Madden, Jonathan Riley-Smith, Michael Angold, Thomas Asbridge, Steven Runciman, Hans Mayer, Christopher Tyerman, and Philip van Tricht, this thesis has provided him or her with a fresh perspective on the matter, supported through facts and evidence not

² 'Bulgaria declares Turkish citizen threat to national security, imposes five-year entry ban'. 13.03.2017. Retrieved from: <http://sofiaglobe.com/2017/03/17/bulgaria-declares-turkish-citizen-threat-to-national-security-imposes-five-year-entry-ban/>. (Accessed 11.05.2018).

discussed by these eminent scholars. If they have learned from and act upon this new knowledge, then I will know that my humble efforts have served their purpose.

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Appendix

Table 1. Orthodox-Slavonic written sources used in this thesis

Written Source	Year	Encyclopedia of Medieval Chronicle (EMC), 2010	Chronicon. Medieval Narrative Sources (CMNS), 2013	Available translations	English translation
The Anonymous Russian Account of the Capture of Constantinople by the Franks (In Novgorodian Chronicles	c. 1430, based on earlier texts.	pp. 1157-1158	No	Russian	Robert Michel and Nevill Forbes (trans.) <i>The Chronicle of Novgorod: 1016-1471</i> , Camden Third Series, Vol.25, London, 1914. <i>FCHMEOS</i> , 2013
A Useful Tale about the Latins (In the Chronicler of Pereslavl-Suzdal. Archive collection)	1262, based on early 13 th Greek manuscript.	No	No	Russian, Bulgarian	No. Excerpts in this thesis.
The Brief Saga of the Latins (In the Chronicler of Pereslavl-Suzdal. Archive collection)	1262, based on early Greek manuscript.	No	No	Russian, Bulgarian	No. Excerpts in this thesis.
The Dispute of Panagiotis with Asimith	c.1350, based on text dated 1274-1282	No	No	Bulgarian, Russian	No. Excerpts in this thesis.

Razumnik-Ukaz	1235 - 1274	No	No	Bulgarian	V. Tăpkova-Zaimova, A. Miltenova, <i>Historical and Apocalyptic Literature in Byzantium and Medieval Bulgaria</i> , East-West Publishers, Sofia, 2011, pp.505-546.
Codex of King Stefan Dušan	1349	No	No	Serbian, Russian	No. Excerpts in this thesis.
King Boril's Synodicon	1211	No	No	Bulgarian, Russian	M. Paneva, Boril's Synodicon. English Translation. Ив. Божилов, А. Тотоманова, Ив. Билярски (ред.) <i>Борил ов синодик. Издание и превод</i> , Пам Пъблишинг, София, 2012.
Tsar Ivan Asen II stone pillar from Veliko Tarnovo	1230	No	No	Bulgarian, Russian	Translated in this thesis.
Nikon Chronicle	c.1520 based on earlier texts	pp. 1150, 1131	p.454	Russian	Serge A. Zenkovsky and Betty Jean Zenkovsky (trans.) <i>The Nikonian Chronicle: From the</i>

					<i>Year 1425- To the Year 1520.</i> Darwin Pres, Princeton, N.J 1989.
Helenic and Roman Chronicle part of Galician- Volhynian Chronicle	1201–1292	p. 658	No	Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian	No. Excerpts in this thesis.
For Sava of Serbia (Serbian Chronograph)	16 th century	p. 1351	No	Serbian, Bulgarian	FCHMEOS, 2013,p 224- 245.
Life of the Martyrs of Zographou. The Latin Attack on Zographou	After 1275	No	No	Bulgarian	FCHMEOS, 2013, p 94
Hojdenie of Dobrynya Andreikovic h, Bishop Antoni Novgorodski	c.1200transc ribed in 14 th century copies.	No	No	Russian, Bulgarian, French: [B.de Kithrovo, <i>Itinéraires russes en Orient.</i> Impri merie Jiles- Mes- Guillaume Fick, Geneve, 1889, pp.115-128.	FCHMEOS, 2013, p.177- 213.
The Chronograph by Mikhail Moxa	1620	No	No	Romanian, Russian, Bulgarian (excerpts)	FCHMEOS, 2013, p.152- 156 (excerpts)
The life of St. Mikhail Voin of Potuka	1375-1393	No	No	Bulgarian	FCHMEOS, 2013, pp.85- 86 (excerpts).

The Life of Philoteia	1375-1393	No	No	Bulgarian	FCHMEOS, 2013, pp.86-87 (excerpts).
Panegyric of John Polyvotski	1375-1393	No	No	Bulgarian	FCHMEOS, 2013, pp.87-88 (excerpts).
Life and small praise for St. Ivan Rilski	c.1470-80	No	No	Bulgarian, Serbian	FCHMEOS, 2013, pp.96-97 (excerpts).
The Prologue Life of Saint Petka	14 th century, based on c.1235 manuscript	No	No	Bulgarian	FCHMEOS, 2013, pp.89-90 (excerpts).
Annonymous travelers account from late 13 th century	Late 13 th century	No	No	Russian	FCHMEOS, 2013, pp.42-43 (excerpts).
Theodosius , 'Life of St. Sava'	Theodosius , 'Life of St. Sava'	No	p.356	Serbian	FCHMEOS, 2013, pp.61-62 (excerpts).
Dometian, 'The life of St.Simeon – Nemanja'	1264	No	p.356	Serbian, Bulgarian	Snezhana Rakova, FCHMEOS, p.75-77 (excerpts)

Table 2. Artefacts referenced in this thesis and their status¹

Artefact	Site	Year of the find	Origin	Date of the artefact/s	Stored in	Published Yes/No
Coin hoard	Rodestiuc fortress	2014	Scandinavia	11 th century	National Historical Museum-Sofia	No. Preliminary report, journalist article
Two Iron spurs	Fraim fortress	2009	Western Europe	End of 12th the beginning of 13th century	Historical Museum - Haskovo	No
Crossbow bolt	Fraim Fortress	2011	Western Europe	End of 12th the beginning of 13th century	Historical Museum - Haskovo	No
Six crossbow bolt, two iron helmets	Moniac fortress	1971-1974, 1994-1996	Western Europe	End of 12th the beginning of 13th century	National Historical Museum-Sofia	No. Preliminary report without photographs
Helmet, crossbow bolts, spears, chain mail armour	<i>Stenimachos</i> fortress	1946	Western Europe	End of 12th, the beginning of 13th century	National Historical Museum-Sofia	No, Preliminary report without photographs
Several crossbow bolts	Okopa fortress	1997	Western Europe	Beginning of 13 th century	Historical Museum Haskovo	No.
More than 10 iron spurs	Lyutitza fortress	2004-2016	Western Europe	End of 12th the beginning of 13th c.	National Historical Museum-Sofia	No
Bronze 'dragon head' spur	Lyutitza fortress	2014	Scandinavian	11 th century	National Historical Museum-Sofia	No. Preliminary report, journalist article

¹ The artefacts in this table are found together with other artefacts, as coins and ceramic vessels in same stratigraphic layers, which also helps for their accurate date.

Two iron spurs and five crossbow bolts	Mezek fortrees	2012	Western Europe	End of 12th the beginning of 13th century	Historical Museum Haskovo	No
Five spurs	Dyadovo (Blisme)	1991-1994	Western Europe	13 th century	Historical Museum Stara Zagora	Three published. Two reported without photographs
Lead seal of Emperor Henry of Flanders	Burgas mineral baths(La Ferme)	2010	Latin Empire	1205-1216	Historical Museum Burgas	Yes
Halbert and dagger	Sozopol (Apolonia Pontika)	2012	Western European	12 th -14 th centuries	Historical Museum-Burgas	No. Journalist article
Golden ring of King Kaloyan	Veliko Tarnovo	1973	Bulgaria	1197-1207	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Lead seal of Emperor Henry of Falnders	Veliko Tarnovo	1986	Latin Empire	1205-1216	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Lead seal Emperor Robert of Courtenay	Veliko Tarnovo	1978	Latin Empire	1221–1228	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Lead seal of Emperor Baldwin II	Popovo	2014	Latin Empire	1228–1261	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Lead seal of Emperor Baldwin II	Pleven	1984	Latin Empire	1228–1261	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Lead seals Constantia	Simeonov grad (Constantia)	1982	Byzantine	End of 12 th c. – 1204	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes

Sword with Latin inscription	Pernik fortress	1921	Western Europe	End of 12th the beginning of 13th century	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Sword, dagger, helmet, spurs	Pernik fortress	1973	Western Europe	End of 12th the beginning of 13th century	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Chain mail 'sock'	Bratzigovo	1927	Western Europe	End of 12th, the beginning 13 th century	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Preliminary report, photos credit to Deyan Rabovyanov
Sword, chain mail armour	Tzepina fortress	Beginning of 20 th century	Western Europe	End of 12th, the beginning 13th century	Historical Museum Pazardjik	No. Preliminary report
Cuman grave	Zlatna Livada	2011	Eastern Europe	First half of 13 th century	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Gornoslav hoard	Gornoslav	1961	Byzantine empire	Buried after 1195	National Historical Museum-Sofia	Yes
Spur	Malkotokale	2016	Western Europe	End of 12th, the beginning 13th century	Historical Museum Yambol	No. Preliminary report
Two spurs	Parorian monastery	2017	Western Europe	End of 12th, the beginning 13th century	Historical Museum Yambol	No. Journalist article